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**INDIA
AND
COMMUNISM**

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(Revised up to the
1st January 1935.)

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INDIA AND COMMUNISM

(Revised up to the 1st January 1935.)

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PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION.

The original edition of *India and Communism*, issued in 1933, was intended for those officers of the Crown, in and outside India, whose official responsibilities require a general working knowledge of Communists' aims and methods in India and the countries on her border. In India it was issued only to those officers whose duties lay at headquarters, central or provincial. A demand has been made that copies should be issued to officers in all districts in the country. I welcome this demand. It shows that the original edition has been doing the work for which it was intended and that the feeling is growing that there is something in my assertion in the original preface, that Communism as preached by the Third International constitutes the gravest danger to the civilization of the modern world.

It was impossible to meet the demand without a reprint. The opportunity has been taken to revise the book and to bring it up to date. A little has been cut out and the immediate results of the Meerut case have been included, though only a rash prophet would claim that the full results of the bathetic ending of that case have yet materialized. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that, in consequence, we are now back in the same position as in 1929 when the case was instituted, with the drawback that our enemies have gained considerably in experience. I can only hope that this revised edition will help those whose duty it is to combat Communism, to neutralize the advantages gained by the other side.

My thanks are again due to the many—servants of the British Crown and others—of whose valuable information use has again been made in this revised edition. Indeed, I readily acknowledge that a compilation of this kind would be an impossibility without the co-operation and assistance which they give so ungrudgingly. In some cases, e.g., Sinkiang, such information is extremely hard come by, and there is a strong temptation in these cases

to generalize from the particular. If that temptation has been resisted in the present volume, resistance has been made easier by the marked ability of the men on the spot to sift the wheat from the chaff and to present affairs in the areas of which they write or speak in true perspective. To such persons (again not all of them servants of the Crown) I owe a double debt of gratitude. On the other hand, nothing has been discarded merely because it came from a source which could not lay claim to specialist knowledge. Due weight has been given to what have seemed credible reports from persons whose limited knowledge of the general situation in the areas in question has made them hesitate to suggest how or where their particular piece of information will fit into the finished jigsaw puzzle.

I am indebted to Mr. J. F. Cowgill, who wrote almost all of the original edition, for all the work involved in its revision. When writing the original work he had also to perform very onerous duties as my Assistant. During the work of revision he had, in theory, no other duties to perform during one-third of the time he had to devote to the task. I must also mention Mr. C. H. Perry of this Bureau who is responsible for the indexing of this volume.

H. WILLIAMSON.

Director, Intelligence Bureau.

NEW DELHI,

1st March 1935.

GLOSSARY.

<i>Aika</i>	.	.	.	Unity.
<i>Aka'i</i>	.	.	.	Lit: Immortal. A term used for an extremist Sikh.
<i>Akali Dal</i>	.	.	.	A force of belligerent Akalis (<i>q. v.</i>).
<i>Amtorg</i>	.	.	.	American Trading Organisation (a Russian Corporation).
<i>Anushilan</i>	.	.	.	Lit: Improvement; culture. The name of the eastern section of the Bengal Revolutionary Party.
<i>Arcos</i>	.	.	.	All-Russian Co-operative Society.
<i>Babbar Akali</i>	.	.	.	Lit: Lion-like Akali (<i>q. v.</i>). Term used for a member of an extremist group of Sikhs who resorted to assassination and plunder.
<i>Bhadralog</i>	.	.	.	Upper middle classes.
C. P. G. B.	.	.	.	Communist Party of Great Britain.
C. P. M.	.	.	.	Communist Party of Malaya.
Comintern	.	.	.	Council of the Communist International and of its <i>alter ego</i> the Soviet Government.
F. E. B.	.	.	.	Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern (<i>q. v.</i>).
<i>Ghadr</i>	.	.	.	Mutiny.
<i>Girni Kamgar</i>	.	.	.	Mill Workers.
H. R. A.	.	.	.	Hindustan Republican Association (or Army).
H. S. R. A.	.	.	.	Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (or Army).
I. K. K. I.	.	.	.	Executive Committee of the Communist International.
<i>Jugantar</i>	.	.	.	Lit: New Age. The name of the western section of the Bengal Revolutionary Party.
<i>Kirti</i>	.	.	.	Worker.

<i>Kirti Kisan Sabha</i>	.	.	Workers' and Peasants' Party.
<i>Kranti</i>	.	.	Revolution.
Krestintern	.	.	Peasants' International.
Kuomintang	.	.	The Nationalist Party of China.
<i>Majlis</i>	.	.	Association.
<i>Mazdoor Fisan</i>	.	.	Workers and Peasants.
<i>Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha</i>			New Young India Society.
O. G. P. U.	.	.	United States (of Soviet Russia) Political Department. (Formerly Cheka.)
<i>Pandal</i>	.	.	A large canvas awning.
P. K. I.	.	.	Partai Kommunist Indonesia.
P. P. T. U. S.	.	.	Pan-Pacific Trades Union Secretariat.
Politbureau	.	.	Political Bureau. An organisation of nine or ten men who jointly form the head of the Government of Russia.
Profintern	.	.	Red International of Trades' Unions (i.e. for Industrial Workers).
<i>Raj</i>	.	.	Rule or government.
R. I. L. U.	.	.	Red International of Labour Unions (<i>vide</i> Profintern).
<i>Samya Sadans</i>	.	.	Lit : Houses of Equality.
<i>Samyavadi Sabha</i>	.	.	Equality Society.
<i>Samyavadi Sangha</i>	.	.	Equality Society.
<i>Satyagraha</i>	.	.	Passive resistance.
<i>Swaraj</i>	.	.	Self-rule or 'self-government'.
<i>Thakin</i>	.	.	Sahib—Originally a member of the ruling class in Burma; latterly usurped by members of the <i>Dohama</i> Society.
U. S. S. R.	.	.	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

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PART ONE

Introductory

INDIA AND COMMUNISM

CHAPTER 1.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT WORK.

A Wrong Diagnosis. A recent article in a Service journal contained the words, "By attributing to the U. S. S. R. plans which are not in its own interest or which are only realizable in the dim future, an attitude of mind may be induced which will ignore the gradual progress of an influence the very nature of which is imperfectly understood. Such an attitude will be dangerous, especially from the point of view of the British Empire." The objects of this book are to attempt to correct that dangerous attitude where it exists, and to provide those whose duty and desire it is to help to preserve intact the existing peace and fabric of the British Commonwealth, with some of the salient facts of Communist machinations in the East generally, and in India in particular.

The Method of this Book. The line to be taken is to show, in as few words as possible, how the sphere of Moscow's influence is gradually encircling India, how her agents are working with ant-like persistence in India itself, and with what weapons and with what success the authorities in India are combating the menace. It will, perhaps, be convenient to move round India from west to south-east, from Persia to Java, giving a short authenticated account of Communist work and achievements in neighbouring countries or colonies, and to conclude with a short history of Communism in India and of the measures being taken to combat it. This being the general "line of march", it will be necessary, for reasons which will be explained at the time, to make two short digressions, one into Burma and the other to Shanghai.

What Communism Means. There are, however, one or two general points, a grasp of which will make

more readable the pages which are to follow. Firstly, it seems necessary to attempt a practical definition of Communism, which, in its present-day sense, has entirely shed its dictionary meaning—"a system of social organisation in which goods are held in common." It is equally a misnomer as designating those schools of thought which aim rather hazily at the attainment of the greatest good for the greatest number by the adoption of certain early Christian principles. A recent authoritative treatise dealing with some general aspects of Communism is too detailed to reproduce here and will be found amongst the appendices (Appendix 1); but two jurists of some eminence have made a somewhat shorter pronouncement on this subject which carries greater conviction than most attempts of the kind. To enable them to arrive at a definite conclusion as to what exactly present-day Communism is, these jurists adopted as their criterion the principle that anything which appears solely and exclusively in the Communist programme, and which is not to be found in the programmes of other political parties (such as the Socialist and Labour Parties), is an unquestionable element of Communism. With this as their standard, they examined most of the authoritative Communist programmes available and isolated the following items :

Political.

To establish a government by soviets (councils of the workmen, peasants and soldiers).

Financial.

(1) To nationalize private banks by confiscation and to transfer to the State all gold reserves, securities, deposits, etc., found therein.

(2) To cancel and repudiate all existing debts to foreign and home capitalists.

Social.

(1) To overthrow forcibly the whole of the existing traditional social order as the only means of realizing Communist aims.*

* "The Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions."—Marx and Engels, 1848.

(2) Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, to wage perpetual war against the forces and traditions of the old society and against any upshoots of the new *bourgeoisie* that may appear.

(3) To abolish the system of inheritance.

Economic.

(1) To confiscate without indemnity all large private (capitalist) undertakings, such as factories, works, mines, electric power stations, railways, systems of transport, communications, large landed estates, machinery, etc.

(2) To transfer landed estates so confiscated to peasants.

(3) To forbid afterwards any sale and purchase of land so transferred.

(4) To confiscate big house property and to remove workers and poor people to rich or *bourgeois* dwellings and residences.

(5) To cancel mortgages prejudicial to poor peasants.

(6) To compel everybody to work ; " who does not work, he does not eat."

(7) Strong economic alliance with the U. S. S. R.

Russian Methods. Secondly, it should be realized that Moscow's policy has never been, at any rate since 1926, the direct conquest of power. It takes the more insidious form of peaceful penetration of existing organisations, of commercial or " cultural " propaganda, and of the secret promotion of general agitation against the Government whose powers it seeks to usurp. Its open activities are often unobjectionable ; its secret machinations are many and well-concealed. Above all, the subversive movements to which it lends support are, in the words of Stalin himself, " national in form but proletarian in essence ". When the critical moment arrives and the peasants or workers of a given country have been goaded into armed revolt, a Workers' Republic is established and another Soviet State is added to the U. S. S. R. ; finally, there comes the process of consolidation, in the course of which the bonds which tie the new

State to Moscow are gradually tightened and the principles of Russian Bolshevism are enforced with increasing rigidity. This, in essence, is Moscow's aim, and the hope of its wide achievement runs through the mountains of literature which her minions have produced and are still producing. That it has been the basis of Soviet policy in the East since Communism first became a power to be reckoned with, is shown by a pronouncement made by the Third International in 1919 to the effect that nationalist movements in the East would receive its support, "as they tend to upset the existing authority while not opposing revolutionary aspirations", and also by the fact that twenty or more European or Asiatic Republics have been coerced by identical methods into joining the U. S. S. R. since the revolution in 1918.

Its Application to India. Lastly, it is necessary to examine the application of this general policy to India. A former Home Member of the Government of India has written that, "the only appeal that Communism can make in India is to the predatory instincts which are to be found throughout the whole country among the 'have-nots', or those who prefer living by their wits to living by honest work. The turbulent crowds in the towns can be raised at any moment by the prospects of loot." But the "have-nots" in many parts of India constitute not only the most numerous but also the most virile section of the population, and in the light of what has been written above, and particularly of Stalin's formula, any effective subversive movement (except, perhaps, that of Gandhi, who has at times revealed a capricious willingness to compromise with the powers that be), whatever its character, must be welcome to Moscow. It is known (and the knowledge is based on information many times confirmed) that Moscow's present intense interest in everything Indian is prompted mainly by the belief that her doctrine will be allowed greater play under an Indian Government than under the present régime.

Communist Training Schools. It is almost certainly for this reason that Moscow is welcoming to her bosom the Sikh *Ghadr* Party, a number of whose members are now undergoing training in the Eastern University at Moscow. Such students are being drawn not only from

India and America (where the Party's headquarters are situated), but also from East Africa and Fiji, in both of which places there exist centres of Indian Sikh disaffection. Reliable reports, corroborated in material detail, have been received from time to time which throw some light on the nature of the training that is given. The Eastern University caters for Orientals of every nationality, but association between the different races is severely discouraged and may even invite the attentions of the Russian secret police (G. P. U.). Before admission, each student is given a pseudonym by which alone he is known throughout the period of his course of training, which, for those who know English lasts for a year, and for those who know only their native language, for eighteen months. Amongst the subjects in which theoretical instruction is given are party discipline, the history of the Russian Communist Party, national problems and military training. Practical training is also given in revolver, rifle and machine-gun firing and in a form of guerilla warfare calculated to fit the students to act as leaders of the masses on the outbreak of revolution. Instruction which was given some years ago in one such academy in the methods of capturing a city with the help of 1,000 men serves to illustrate the purpose of these courses. The plan was to divide the available material into several groups, each of which was to obtain employment in a strategic point, such as the post office, the telegraph office, the electric power station or the water-works. At the appointed hour these Communist agents were to paralyze the administration and assume control of the city. The methods by which Leningrad was captured are being taught for employment elsewhere. How near a handful of raiders came to achieving much the same results (by less laborious methods) in Chittagong in 1930 is a matter of recorded history.

Russian Methods in India. A cyclostyled document which made its appearance in India in February 1934, and which subsequently received general approval in Moscow, reveals how the final stage of consolidation is to be worked out in India. The document is believed to have been drafted by one of the more important of the Meerut convicts. It may be allowed to speak for itself—

“The organs of struggle will obviously be strike committees, peasant committees, and later soldiers’ committees, which will be transformed during the process of the struggle into workers’ soviets and peasants’ soviets, *i.e.*, the basic units of the Soviet power. This is the most important part in the Communist strategy in the Indian revolution. . . . But the process of revolution does not stop there. Under the rule of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Soviet Government there will be a rapid development of industry, a progressive diminution of the importance of the capitalist element and the transition of agriculture from the individual to the collective basis of production.”

A Concrete Example. For the benefit of those who are in doubt about conditions in countries which are under Communist domination, I may quote a few lines from a Consular report from the Near East. “The situation in the Caucasus during May was reported to have grown worse. Scarcity of food, clothing and also of houses was very acute. People travelled from Tiflis to Erivan” (a distance of a hundred miles or so), “and even further afield, to get the bare necessities of every-day life. Living accommodation is terrible; hundreds of men are reported to live in a single caravanserai.

“Public health is terribly bad. Owing to undernourishment and poor living accommodation, many diseases are prevalent, especially among children, and the new generation is feeble, sickly and subject to many serious diseases, notably tuberculosis. . . .

“Many villages have revolted as a whole. The Soviet treated the rebels with absolute cruelty, . . . swept entire villages, killing the women, old men and children, instead of the fighting villagers whom they failed to round up. Hundreds of old, poor villagers and women were exiled to Siberia in place of their rebel sons and husbands.”

Even when due allowance has been made for exaggeration—inevitable when the main source of such information is probably the refugees themselves—there still remain the conspicuous facts that this particular report was confirmed in all material details by the dispatches of a German correspondent to his paper and that the handling

of similar reports from other areas where Communism has obtained a substantial footing is an all too common feature of an Intelligence officer's daily task. Their application to an independent Indian can better be imagined than described.

The Rôle of the Soviet Trader. It will, perhaps, be convenient at this stage to touch upon the economic side of Russian policy in its relation to foreign countries. This aspect of what amounts to Communist activity is not without its importance, particularly in the East. There are many recorded examples of how Moscow attempts to combine the infiltration of her political theories with seemingly respectable trading operations. I might, for instance, have selected as a case in point the history of Mongolia, where the unhampered efforts of Russian traders quickly changed the whole face of the country, made the channels of trade run to Russia instead of to China, and in a few years gave the former country control over every form of Mongolian activity to the exclusion of the latter. Or I might have cited the still more recent case of Sinkiang where similar causes are producing not dissimilar results. But these are stories of advanced stages of neglect which I hope it will never be India's lot to experience, and it seems preferable to provide an illustration from a part of the world which is neither contiguous to the Russian border, nor so easy a prey to Moscow's insidious influences. I wish first to make it clear, however, that it is not my intention to suggest that the expansion of Russian trade, in whatever direction, has for its sole object the extension of the sphere of the Comintern's sinister influence. Not only is such a dogma absurd, but it is also against the facts. Russia, no less than other industrial countries of the world, must have a market for her products, but there is this difference between the Soviet economic policy and that of the more normal world, that wherever her products have found their way, thither have followed sooner or later Moscow's political emissaries. The structure of the Soviet Government (which holds a monopoly of Russian trade) is so inextricably interwoven with that of the Communist International and every phase of Soviet activity is so bound up with Communist politics that this succession of events is inevitable.

The Amtorg Trading Corporation. A special committee over which the Hon'ble Mr. Hamilton Fish presided was created by the American House of Representatives in May 1930 to investigate Communist activities in the United States. Several pages of their report are devoted to a discussion of the affairs of Amtorg, the Russian trading organisation which roughly fulfils in America the notorious offices which Arcos did in London and Yuzhamtorg in Buenos Aires. (It is of interest to recall the fact that the British authorities caused the premises of Arcos to be searched by the Metropolitan Police in 1926 on the grounds that it had become a centre of Communist intrigue, and that the Argentine police raided Yuzhamtorg a few years later on identical grounds and made 160 arrests.) The Fish Committee found that the then chairman of Amtorg, his four predecessors, and the business manager (who was "not fitted or competent to handle large business matters") had all held high positions in the Soviet Government and in the Communist Party just prior to entering America. One had been chief of the G. P. U. in Rostov-on-the-Don; another had served terms in fifty prisons and eventually became a member of the Politbureau. They were not only Communists but revolutionaries, and they retained, and would almost certainly take advantage of, their right to reavow their Communism when they returned home. They held their positions in Amtorg as political appointments and represented the Russian Government's control. "They are dictated to by Communists", the report continued; "only by word of mouth have they ceased to be Communists. They were called upon to renounce Communism that they might enter the United States, but in every question relating to Communism where evasion could be had, they availed themselves of it." Although the Committee found that there was not sufficient competent legal evidence on the record to prove the connexion of the Amtorg Trading Corporation, as a body corporate, with subversive activities, there was documentary evidence to show that it handled funds for at least one strike conducted by Communists and for various other causes unconnected with trade. The absence of competent evidence is the less surprising when it is known that the record discloses the fact that it was the directors' purpose

to keep from the Committee evidence which might be damaging to Amtorg. To this end, a conference was called, when Amtorg officials knew that the Corporation's affairs were to be investigated, to outline the evidence to be tendered and to prepare statements for the various officials to swear to. One man, a vice-president, resigned on this issue (because he "did not wish to participate in perjury as was done by the President and the others"), and is now under sentence of death in Russia, because he refused to return there after resignation.

Soviet Flag Follows Soviet Trade. Though the history of Amtorg has been selected as a handy example of the correlation of Russian trade with Communist activities, conditions in America must not be regarded as exceptional. In Asia alone, Manchuria and Sinkiang are not the only countries where political and economic exploitation go hand in hand or where Russia has obtained an economic foothold (amounting in some cases almost to a stranglehold) which is designed to cut off the country in question from its old allegiances and to make it an integral part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Saudi Arabia, Persia, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan have all had similar experiences at one time or another, much, if not all, of this expansion of Russian trade having been made at the expense of British firms. With it there has come, as a logical consequence, a steady increase of Soviet political influence in the areas affected and the maxim "Flag follows Trade" on which Moscow's propagandists affect to pour such scorn, is more than applicable to Russia's own commercial policy. When the Soviet has obtained an economic stranglehold such as it has in Persia, in Sinkiang, and in Mongolia, and such as it is attempting to obtain in a dozen other Eastern countries, mere formal protests are of no avail and the country in question must either offer open resistance, with all its risks, or go the way that the others have gone. It must be accounted fortunate that the operation of the Ottawa agreement has considerably enhanced Moscow's difficulties where India is concerned.

CHAPTER 2.

THE LESSONS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION.

China, a Base for Operations in India. It is quite outside my present province to go so far afield as Germany in the early days of 1933, or as Spain, more recently still, in order to show the disastrous and bloody effects of giving rein to Communist agitators. Murder, pillage and arson, and eventually a form of civil war, were the price of neglect in those two countries, whose recent history has been written, along with that of other countries in similar plight, by abler pens than mine. But it seems hardly possible to do justice to the subject of the present work without making a brief reference to events in central south China, which, though they are not, strictly speaking, within the scope of my task, have none the less an important lesson to bring to students of Communism in the East. The importance of China's message to India, in particular, is greatly enhanced by the knowledge that, even so long ago as 1925, Zinoviev proclaimed that, instead of the "well-trodden paths" to India through Persia and Afghanistan—paths well observed by the British—it was China that had "become for us the central starting-point for action in India". China's importance to Moscow was not only as an "incendiary centre for revolutionary and moral action", but also as a "strategical base for real technical contact with India". The fighting slogan of the Communists was, "Via revolutionary China to the Federal Republic of the United States of India". The *International Press Correspondence* of the 9th July 1925 voiced the hopes and aspirations of Communist Russia in the words: "China has revolted to-day; tomorrow Indo-China and India will rise. Shanghai, Hong Kong, Peking and Canton have revolted to-day; tomorrow Calcutta and Madras will rise." That these hopes proved barren is due more to circumstances outside of Moscow's control than to lack of effort to bring them to fulfilment.

Communist Penetration. The previous chapter has displayed some of the fruits of Communism in a

corner of the Near East, and it is my present purpose briefly to appreciate, with one eye fixed always on India, the ravages which an advanced stage of unhindered Communist penetration wrought in a part of Republican China in the course of a comparatively short period. The justification lies in my strong adherence to the view that the examination of a living picture of what Communism can achieve when left to its own devices, is well worth the time spent upon it. *Experientia docet*, and it is only by a close study of like cause and like effect that provision can be made against the dangers of the future.

Some Fallacies. Before a start is made, it would be as well to make it clear that the fallacy, so glibly voiced and so rapidly believed in India prior to 1928, was equally prevalent amongst both foreign and indigenous observers in China in the early days of the Communist troubles there. Even when events in China and in Java were cited as examples of the powerful and baneful results which Communists had been able to achieve amongst Oriental populations, the thinking man in the Indian street was wont to argue: "But India is different. Bolshevism is the negation of religion. Its doctrines cannot possibly thrive amongst a people whose social fabric is based on religion. Bolshevism connotes equality of status. India is the home of caste and feudalism. The teachings of Communism can never take deep root in this country." So, too, his counterpart in China, when trouble first broke out in 1925, dismissed the theory that Russian influence was responsible for it on the simple plea that Communism was a political creed repugnant to the Chinese. There are still many people who maintain that Communism is, in China, a courtesy title for the familiar phenomena of banditry, discontent and unemployment. Those with first-hand knowledge of Chinese affairs and in intimate daily touch with the course of events in what is now called Soviet China are, however, unanimous in asserting that such a view is widely mistaken. Many have produced evidence in support of their assertions.

Communist China—a Danger to India. Attention must here be drawn to the conclusions which a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau drew from a lengthy first-hand study of the early stages of the Chinese

revolution. The following instructive passage, taken from Sir David Petrie's book (a short description of which is given in Chapter 3), speaks for itself: "For the time being, Communism appears to have received a definite set-back, but it may again be taken, at any time, as an ally to the bosom of one or other of the warring parties. It emerges, too, that even Chiang Kai-Shek and the anti-Communist influences he represents do not apparently dislike other foreign powers the less because they hate Russia the more. Thus it would seem unwise to count with any certainty on the set-back to Bolshevism being anything more than a temporary one. At any rate, it is safe to assume that, for so far ahead as anyone can see, there will be no strong, impartial, central Government in Peking or elsewhere, and there will be no settled and efficient administration in the provinces. In such a soil every foul weed is bound to take root, and Bolshevism will probably continue to flourish either because of the active encouragement it will receive or because of the total absence of resistance it will encounter. Similarly, the Indian revolutionary element will find a footing in a disordered China, and the *Ghadr* plotter and the Soviet emissary will join forces and endeavour each to exploit the other to his own advantage. The combination is an awkward enough one, and it demands that we should continue to observe it with a jealous and watchful eye, at least so long as it is in vigorous existence in a country so contiguous to our borders as is China."

Present Operations in Central China. In the light of the much-vaunted successes of Chiang Kai-Shek's recent campaign in the Communist areas, the above opinion (expressed nearly eight years ago) possibly needs some modification, even though the time may not yet have arrived to attempt an appreciation of the Chinese general's exploits. Press reports in glowing terms from the seat of war would seem to indicate, on the one hand, that the rounding up of the red armies is proceeding in an entirely satisfactory manner and that they are making a last desperate fight for existence. On the other hand, the official Communist organ, the *International Press Correspondence*, referred in a recent issue to the "lying reports of the Kuomintang about its 'victories'" and went on to claim considerable successes for the Chinese

red armies on all three fronts. In the face of a mass of such conflicting evidence, the only possible course is to record two established facts—that the circle of Communist influence is growing smaller by a gradual process of attrition and that the red armies, never very well equipped or plentifully provisioned, are being compelled more and more to adopt "hit and run" methods to replenish their armouries and their commissariat stores—and then to pass on to an examination of conditions as they were before the present operations began. Non-combatants within the zone of military occupation will be able to find but small comfort in a victory by either side for some time to come.

Indigenous Communism. Although Communism in China, as, too, in India, was originally an exotic growth, the seeds being sown and the first-shoots nourished by foreign agencies in a soil made fertile by agrarian discontent, it is no longer correct to assume that Moscow exercises direct control over the Chinese Communist Party. The days when Russian advisers were members of the executive committee and when Russian officers were attached to Chinese units in the field ended with the expulsion of the Borodin Mission in 1927. The red armies and the new central Soviet Government of China, set up in December 1931, are almost entirely, if not wholly, staffed and manned by Chinese, many of whom have received their political or military training in Soviet schools and universities. Papers seized from Hilaire Noulens* in June 1931 proved that 172 such students returned to China between September 1930 and April 1931.

The Central Soviet Government. Inefficient and ill-equipped though the central Soviet Government of China may have been, its auxiliaries, the red armies, had established (in default of serious offensive operations against them by the recognised Government of the day) effective control over a large belt of territory more than four times the size of Great Britain, which roughly comprised three of the central provinces.† By force of

*Vide Chapter 7.

†The area has, of course, been considerably reduced by recent operations.

circumstances, if for no other reason, the sphere of its influence was slowly spreading outwards towards Hankow, Amoy, and Foochow when Chiang Kai-Shek began his most recent so-called "bandit suppression campaign"—the name itself being a tacit refusal to look facts in the face. Just before this campaign began, it looked almost as though the Communist menace would assume such proportions that the whole of the trade of central China would be seriously interrupted, and that the Yangtse as a main artery of water-borne trade would be likewise affected.

Local Adaptations. With the consolidation of the Communist position in any particular area, there had been built up in the course of time, first in the villages, later in the townships, and finally in the districts, centres of Soviet authority, all of which were modelled on the Russian plan controlled by the Communist Party of China, with its headquarters in Shanghai. The Party, guided by a small central executive committee, was supreme. Draft bills had been drawn up and passed into law by the district and provincial Congresses of the Chinese soviets. All these "laws" bore the extravagant impress of Russian influence and advice, but, with a few exceptions, they remained on paper, more as a programme setting forth an ideal conception which must be kept before the masses than as something to which practical application could be given. The exceptions were those which provided for the confiscation of all land without compensation and its division, under the supervision of the soviets, amongst the "toiling peasantry" and the soldiers of the red armies. The forcible confiscation of the property of the wealthy land-owners, the temples, the monasteries, and the churches was accompanied by the cancellation of all verbal or written feudal and usurious agreements. Soviet banks were established; notes and silver coins were issued, the former having the imprint of Lenin's head upon them and the latter the hammer and sickle; and a central government agency was set up and given a monopoly of the marketing of agricultural produce. On the credit side there must be set the facts, noticed in the report of the Lytton Committee, that the system of taxation was simplified, that steps were taken to develop irrigation,

rural credit systems, and co-operatives, and that plans were also made for the establishment of public schools, hospitals, and dispensaries. Gambling and the smoking of opium were also rigidly suppressed.

Thus did those responsible for the direction of Communist policy seek to bring into being a modified form of the Soviet State adapted to local conditions and to the special circumstances of the case, and thus is there given to those who read the signs aright an example of the working of Moscow's many-sided policy. Another autonomous Soviet State in the making had been added to the U. S. S. R. The State launched, indigenous oarsmen must propel it. Russian academics are still at the disposal of those who wish to avail themselves of the fare provided there, but apart from this and from small irregular subsidies and periodical tours of inspection by eminent Communists, no other assistance is forthcoming in the later stages.

Early Methods. That the approach to the millenium was by paths of untold suffering is a matter of small account; for the true Communist stifles present discomfort with thoughts of future bliss. To those sufferers to whom Communism is an imposition rather than a faith, however, such resignation is impossible, and it is probably amongst this class of person that the red armies are most generally confounded with bandits pure and simple. For this there are good reasons. In the early days, in 1925, the very existence of these armies, openly carrying the device of the hammer and sickle, depended in a large measure on their using the one weapon with which authority within, and, indeed, the whole fabric of, the U. S. S. R. is maintained, namely, terror. The record of the red armies from the moment they began operations will not bear minute inspection. Pillage, rapine, and the destruction of homes and crops, in fact the whole range of human beastliness, were indulged in in open and ordered method, not for the immediate material benefit of the perpetrators (though it would be absurd to suggest that such a motive was completely absent), but with the ultimate object of reducing the countryside to a waste and the people to a state of abject terror in order to force

them into the ranks of the red armies, where alone stomachs were filled and safety could be found.

Amongst the first things which the Communists did was to kill all the landlords, burn all the title deeds and dig up all the landmarks. Marriage, religion and the hereditary system were next abolished and the prosperous peasant (the Chinese equivalent of the *kulak*) was relentlessly proscribed by the confiscation of all capital above a very small amount. All men between the ages of fifteen and forty, and many of the women as well, were later conscripted for service in, or with, the red armies and boys below the age of fifteen were compelled to join the "Youth Vanguard" which, as its name implies, often forms the spearhead of the Communist attack. A moving pen-picture of the methods adopted at that time has been drawn by a special correspondent of the *North China Herald*, who wrote as follows: "No less than a dozen towns on the Kiangsi-Hunan border were completely destroyed. Landlords lost their lands, rich farmers were deprived of their houses and properties, and innumerable old farmers were thrown into death-pits because they were considered as human parasites. In this manner homes were destroyed, home-folks separated, human ethics wrecked, morality shattered, and what was left was barbarism, manslaughter and a general return to a life even more cruel than that of the primitive age—the blessing of Communism!"

Apostles of Communism. At a later stage, it is true, new methods were in evidence, but this can hardly be said to condone the early savagery inadequately described above. When the Communists continued their advance in 1927, the military forces were preceded by groups of highly trained Communist agents whose duty it was to prepare the population in the towns and villages on the line of march for the advent of the troops, and to inculcate in them some degree of appreciation of the doctrines of Communism. With the onward march of the troops, the representatives of this political organization remained, scattered throughout the villages and townships on the line of march, laying, by quiet but very thorough propaganda, the foundations of those forces which are now known as the red armies and of that

organisation which styles itself the Central Soviet Government of China. It is true, too, that captured villages are no longer indiscriminately pillaged or destroyed, that only the wealthy and the powerful suffer whilst the poor are encouraged to carry on business as usual ; but the large uncultivated tracts of country on the fringe of the Communist zone are indications that the "business" is by no means as flourishing as it might be, and there can be little doubt that the peasants are leading miserable lives under the red régime, whose strength is that it is a reign of terror.*

Application to India. Much more could be written of the events which led up to the present position, or even of more recent happenings in the westerly province of Sinkiang, but enough has, I think, been said to show to what lengths Communism neglected can go. It may still be argued that India is not China. To this the reply would seem to be that it is certainly not beyond the realm of possibility that the India of tomorrow, surrounded, as well she may be, by hostile spheres of Communist influence, may have her times of stress no less severe than those of the China of yesterday. More specifically, it is relevant to inquire what the position in Burma would have been if the troops dispatched to quell the recent rebellion there had been required to deal with trouble engineered by Moscow's agents on India's Persian and Afghan borders or elsewhere. And, finally, emphasis must be laid on the fact that the whole teaching of Communist history is that Moscow will choose the time of greatest stress to play her cards. With a flourishing organisation already in being in the country chosen for action, the achievement of her sinister objective will be simple ; her efforts in a country where the authorities have been fore-armed with accurate information, have not neglected the signs, have armed themselves with sufficient powers, and have used them as occasion demanded, will be comparatively harmless.

* Krylinko, the Commissioner of Justice in the U. S. S. R., very recently justified the numerous executions which followed the murder of Kirov in the words : "Class war makes employment of the weapon of terror absolutely necessary and rejection thereof absolutely impossible."

CHAPTER 3.

A PRELIMINARY APPRECIATION.

Sir David Petrie's Book. Before I enter upon the narrative proper, there is yet another preliminary task to be performed—namely, to give some indication of the dangers which the success of Communist effort holds in store for the autonomous Indian provinces of the future—in order that an early understanding of something of what Communism implies for India may make more readable and intelligible the chapters that are to follow. Towards the close of 1927, there was produced under the direction of Mr. (now Sir David) Petrie, the then Director of the Intelligence Bureau, a volume entitled *Communism in India, 1924-1927*, which, as its name implied, brought up to the end of 1927 the history of events which an earlier work by Sir Cecil Kaye had left at the conclusion of the Cawnpore conspiracy case.

A Comparison of Symptoms Then and Now. Sir David Petrie's appreciation of the situation as it was just prior to the dark days of 1928 seems so exactly to fit the trend of events to-day that I cannot do better than quote at some considerable length from the concluding pages of his book. The Cawnpore and Meerut prisoners have been and gone back ; the star of Communism has twice risen and waned ; and, so it seems, we are now entering upon a third cycle wherein Communist workers and emissaries, wiser by the experience of their comrades of yesterday, will work in India with sharper tools and greater circumspection. Moscow's schools and academies are working at full pressure. The encircling of India is progressing and "strategical bases for real technical contact with India" are gradually being formed within reach of India's frontiers. What Moscow has lost in Afghanistan by Amanullah's abdication she has more than made up by recent successes in Sinkiang which have brought the sphere of Russian influence right up to the Indian border. Non-co-operation has been succeeded by civil disobedience, which has in its turn given birth to

the Congress Socialist Party which only lacks a leader of Jawahar Lal Nehru's calibre to make it a force to be reckoned with. The Burma rebellion of 1932 was no less serious, though fortunately more remote from India proper, than the Punjab disturbances of 1919 or the Malabar rebellion of 1921-2. Recent industrial disputes in Bombay, Nagpur, Calcutta, and elsewhere have shown that Indian Communists are regaining the hold over organised labour which the institution of the Meerut Case rent from them. In short, it is clear that another Communist offensive against India, more subtle and far more serious than that of 1928, is being prepared to be discharged if ever the opportunity is allowed to present itself. The present is no time for that form of mental apathy which reveals itself in a recent editorial article in an Indian paper : " There is no Communist Party in Bengal . . . and the results of the Meerut case have proved to the hilt that there is no Communist movement worth the name in this country." Such open scoffers in positions wherefrom they are able to influence public opinion are, perhaps, an even greater menace to India's peace than the Communists themselves ; for a sane and rightly instructed public opinion reinforced by a watchful and well-equipped Executive has proved on more than one occasion to be a country's strongest bulwark against ruin of Moscow's making.

The Dangers of Success. " What the Soviet desires is not the conversion of India to the Communist creed (for it expressly recognises that in Eastern countries the nationalist spirit must be stimulated and played upon) ", so wrote Sir David Petrie, " but such a general upheaval, such a widespread outbreak of disorder as will render a continuance of our rule impossible. In non-co-operation we have had a clear illustration of a state of affairs after Russia's own heart, an upheaval which, even without outside direction or assistance, shook our authority as it has seldom been shaken. It may frankly be admitted that the combination of circumstances that favoured the birth of non-co-operation was altogether exceptional—war-weariness and economic pressure, apprehension and unsettlement in the minds of Indian Muslims, the bitter memories of the Punjab disturbances

of 1919, and finally a leader in the person of Mr. Gandhi, whose appeal to the mass mind was semi-divine and whose influence was far more religious than political. But if the hour and the man are not again likely to arrive together, there may yet be movements of a serious enough character, even though they fall short of the country-wide scale of that inaugurated by Mr. Gandhi. The Punjab disturbances of 1919 were purely secular in their origin and owed much to the activities of the propagandist and the agitator ; had they occurred at a time when our hands were already full on the North-West Frontier, or in other directions, their suppression might have been far more difficult and their challenge to Government's ability to prosecute a war incalculably more serious. The Malabar rebellion was also provoked by political mischief-mongers, and it might have taken far longer to smother had Government been heavily pre-occupied in other directions. Both these outbreaks were strictly indigenous in their origin, and they were supported neither by foreign direction nor by foreign money. But such isolation is not to be looked for in future, and the stimulation of disorders by means of trained propagandists and liberal financial support are among the more obvious and elementary factors that will have to be reckoned with. What is more, Russia has now spread her net of intrigue so wide that she could probably succeed in arranging that troubles outside our borders should synchronize with any serious outbreak within them. At least her position of influence in places like Afghanistan, Central Asia and China suggests disquieting possibilities in this direction. If ever India were to be seriously troubled on any widespread scale, the extent to which the situation might be exploited by an efficient Communist organisation can readily be imagined. An Indian Communist's appreciation of the possibilities is as follows :— ' The time to start *satyagraha* will be when we are most organised, when the Government has made itself most unpopular, and when the political situation outside India has added to its distractions and increased its embarrassments ; such a situation may arise any day.' The longer Communism can go on propagating the idea that

by their own action the masses themselves can remove the British tyranny and every ill from which they suffer under it, the more formidable will be the conflagration it will set alight when the time comes to apply the match. I am asking no one to believe that Bolshevik Russia can achieve the supernatural (as was popularly believed of Germany), but I do, on the other hand, lay stress on the consideration that the ease with which popular feeling against the Government can be whipped up in this country, will ever tend to increase the odds in favour of Communism being able either to find its opportunity or to make it. The special danger to India arising out of the Bolshevik penetration of countries contiguous to her borders is well expressed in the following passage from a recently published article from the pen (probably) of an Indian Communist in Europe: 'However that may be, the question of immediate concern to the Indian Government is whether, if necessary by a recourse to armed force, it can eradicate the new centre of Bolshevik influence from which infectious Marxist doctrines may spread to India. If it were merely to stop the distribution of Bolshevik pamphlets and literature (some of which have, perhaps, been printed and forged by anti-Bolshevik agents in Europe), the task, though difficult, is by no means insurmountable. A rigorous censorship and close examination of foreign mails can, for all effective purposes, do the trick, but the real impossible task is to stop the spread of ideas which travel without vehicle and gain momentum from resisting force. The very existence of a pro-Bolshevik Afghan State will be the greatest sign-post of Bolshevism to the tribes of the North-Western Frontier Province, who will pass the message onwards to India.'

" Extensive internal disorders, even though falling short of armed rebellion, may nevertheless create difficulties of a sufficiently formidable character. The dispersal of large hostile mobs is ever a matter of the utmost difficulty to the civil authorities, while to the military it is anathema. There can be no more disagreeable duty than the use of force against a rabble which can never stand a chance against well-disciplined and well-armed police or troops. It is equally true that there is

nothing that alienates popular sympathy and kindles popular indignation so quickly as the shooting of the members of a mob (no matter how much they may have deserved it) by the armed forces of the State. The only remedy, therefore, which the Government has against a general mob-rising is the very one which is most likely to aggravate it, as recent events at Shanghai, Hankow and Canton will bear witness. The power of the infuriated rabble was well illustrated at Hankow, when the British were driven from their Concession, not by the armies of Canton but by hordes of yelling Chinese, drunk with anti-British hatred. Disturbances of Communistic origin, even if of lesser magnitude, can never be but the beginning of greater evil, for their suppression will, by exciting popular sympathy, inevitably shorten the time and pave the way to another and more serious recurrence. To leave all question of active violence on one side, it needs few words to point out the mischief that Communism might do were it to obtain a proper grip over organised, or even unorganised, labour in this country. During a time of war (possibly of Moscow's making) the calling of a general or sectional strike among railway-workers, dockers, etc., might completely paralyze Government's ability to procure supplies and to keep open its lines of communication.

“ A study of the dangers arising out of the spread of Communism in India inevitably suggests a consideration of the possible safeguards that can be adopted against it : but this latter is naturally a subject that cannot be usefully discussed in the open. There is, however, one general consideration I desire to advance ; and, as it is a fairly obvious one, I can be giving but little away in putting it forward. It is this, that the amount of mischief Communism can do us in India will depend mainly on the response from within that is accorded to efforts from without. Outside assistance will undoubtedly be freely available in the shape of agents, propaganda, money and ideas. But none of these will avail, unless effective touch and co-operation can be established with those sections of the Indian populace—revolutionary societies or labour bodies—which are willing to make common cause with our enemies. That there will always

be such possible points of contact is unquestionable, for the hatred of British rule which animates both will always serve to establish a certain identity of interest between the Indian extremist and the Bolshevik agent—predisposing the one to accept assistance and the other to render it. Of this contention the ease and celerity with which the Communists captured and united the native revolutionary elements in Java furnish a recent and striking illustration. Therefore, while the Government's watch on the indigenous forces of disorder must always be sufficiently vigilant to enable it to detect any new accretions of strength, its face must be rigidly set against the leaving unclosed of any loophole whatsoever by which the agents and doctrines of Communism might find admission to this country. It would be folly to despise the day of small things, for the germ is bound to multiply, even as that of an infectious disease, and to taint the entire body politic. It would be as little justifiable for the Government to relax its vigilance in time of peace as it would be for our health authorities to discard precautions when the public health is at its best. Wherever Communism manifests itself, it should be met and stamped out like the plague. The spread of Communism in India is not one of those problems which may be looked at from a particular 'angle of vision'; it must be looked straight in the face, and it must be fought with the most unrelenting opposition."

PART TWO

India's Neighbours

CHAPTER 4.

PERSIA.

Agabekov's Revelations. Moscow's aims and achievements in Persia, and particularly in eastern Persia, have been detailed at great length by Georgi Agabekov, the apostate G. P. U. (State Political Department) agent who held many very important posts in those parts, and to the general accuracy of whose testimony on the subject the police of five countries have certified. Georgi Agabekov made a very full statement in 1930 and has subsequently written several books* and articles dealing with his activities as head of the Bolshevik secret service in the Near and Middle East. It is outside the scope of a work of this nature to give long extracts from his writings, and it must suffice to say that they reveal the fact that Moscow has, since 1926, attempted to secure a foothold in Persia through its consular officers and its trade agencies and has managed to obtain considerable influence over the Persian Government itself.

Communist Activity. Through these channels, and also, to some extent, through Russian clubs and schools, Communist propaganda has spread throughout Persia during the past ten or twelve years, and has resulted, in several instances, in agrarian or industrial unrest which can almost invariably be traced to one or other of the various media employed. Thus, trouble amongst the employees of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1929 followed closely on the establishment of a new Soviet consulate at Mohammerah ; and a year or so later, the Bakhtiarian landlords experienced considerable difficulty with their tenants in a locality where the Soviet Government had recently opened a branch of their oil-selling agency. The Persian Government have striven to combat what they rightly diagnosed as a threat to their very existence, but their action has always been

*e.g., *O. G. P. U.* and *The Cheka at Work.*

strictly limited by fear of commercial reprisals, and as Russia's economic stranglehold has grown tighter year by year, and as more and more of Persia's highest officials have become entangled financially in the Russian net, so have the efforts of the Persian Government lost more and more of their vigour and continuity. A vigorous sweep of the broom, such as many in Persia would wish to see, might provoke reactions of an inconvenient nature. A few obvious duties have, it is true, been forced upon an unwilling Government—the prevalence of Communist teaching in Soviet schools caused the peremptory closing of all foreign primary institutions throughout the country, and the more recent discovery that the Communist intelligence organisation had paid agents in nearly every Government office and was subsidizing operators in the telegraph office and bribing postal officials was necessarily followed by a large number of arrests and prosecutions and deportations. These arrests and prosecutions still continue, particularly since the appointment of a new chief of police, but the fountain-head—the consulates and the trade agencies—still remain untouched.

Present Methods. For one reason or another the Communist International (as distinct, if this is possible, from the Soviet Government) had made comparatively little visible progress up to 1931, except in Azerbaijan, where Communist influence is so highly developed that Moscow could detach it from Persia almost whenever she wishes to do so. The economic depression which that year brought with it, however, presented fresh opportunities for subversive propaganda in the rest of Persia of which the Comintern took full and immediate advantage. Widespread poverty and discontent provided a fertile soil on which the seeds of Communism were thickly sown, and Persia rapidly became, in the words of a competent observer, 'the centre of Soviet propaganda in the Near and Middle East', supplanting Afghanistan in that respect. There is a certain amount of documentary evidence in support of this contention, so far, at any rate, as India is concerned, and a part of it will be scrutinized at a later stage in this chapter. Every possible Russian agency seems to have been harnessed to the task of spreading this Communist propaganda. *Pseudo-refugees*, school-

masters, traders of all races, officials of the Persian Government, and even a number of so-called White Russians were employed in various capacities. The chief agencies of the Comintern were those of Persazneft (the Soviet Persian Oil Trust) which is particularly well-suited to this type of work by reason of its numerous and widely separated distributing centres.

Communist Agents at Work. The recent history of Jamshed Mohammadoff, a former employee of Persazneft, is illustrative of this state of affairs. Mohammadoff was given the post of interpreter to the Soviet Consul-General at Tehran when the former interpreter was expelled from Persia for various nefarious acts. A month after his appointment Mohammadoff himself fell under suspicion and was arrested by the police in possession of incriminating papers. A search of his house revealed his connexion with a widespread organisation in eastern Persia known as the Peasants' Union. Further enquiries based on these papers disclosed a well-organised and widespread net of propagandists distributed through the villages, particularly in the vicinity of Birjand. Certain of these "cells" were discovered and extensive arrests followed. These revelations were the more satisfactory because a number of instances of terrorism directed against wealthy merchants and landowners in that particular area had been disturbing the authorities for some time past. It could not be proved that these incidents were the result of the agitation amongst the peasants, but they were without precedent in that part of the world and it seems likely that they were. Extensive operations of this kind cost money, and there can be no doubt that this is provided by the many outposts of the U. S. S. R. within Persia itself. Agabekov went so far as to state that most, if not all, of the Soviet's so-called trade agencies are nothing more than branches of Moscow's very widespread intelligence organisation, and, although it is doubtful whether all the information gathered by underhand means materially reinforces the position of the Soviet Government *vis-à-vis* that of Persia, yet the part which this organisation has played, and is playing, in the furtherance of Moscow's ultimate aims is by no means insignificant. The employees of these Soviet

agencies perform a dual task, and Agabekov's writings gave several authenticated accounts of such agents (Persians and Armenians as well as Russians), at first engaged solely to obtain commercial information, having been employed, when the probationary period was past and when their mettle had been proved, to spread Communist ideas amongst the indigenous population in the intervals of, and under the cloak of, their ostensible and lawful avocations.

Anti-British Propaganda. Much of the Communist activity in Persia is directed against Britain generally and British interests in Persia in particular. Agabekov's instructions, when he first assumed control in 1926, were, *inter alia*, to "prepare" the Kurds on account of the strategic position which they would occupy "in the future conflict between England and Russia", and to stir up the Bakhtiarians so that they might harass the British rear and destroy the Anglo-Persian oilfields "in the event of an attack by the Imperialist powers on the U. S. S. R.", and a large part of the rest of his plan of campaign was also directed against British interests and towards the ousting of British influence.

Indians in Persia. It had been known for some considerable time past that there existed in Persia a band of disaffected Indian *Ghadr* Sikhs, some of whom were lorry drivers and others shop-keepers, who had been engaging in anti-British activities, but it was not till early in 1931 that it was realized that their activities were being organised and indirectly controlled by the Soviet authorities in Moscow and in Persia. Since then, it has been well established that this is the case and that a number of Indians in Kerman and Duzdap are working as Communist agents for the dissemination of Communist literature and ideas. They are, moreover, in touch with some of the Soviet consulates in Persia, which are anxious to establish connexion with India through them, and are, of course, in constant association with the Russian trade agencies, many of which, in the light of what has been written above, must be accounted little more than outposts of the Communist International.

Some Specific Cases. In September 1931, following the return of Narain Singh (a member of the *Ghadr* Party of some ten years' standing) from a visit to Moscow, there was a general extension of *Ghadr* organisations into north-eastern Persia. "Contacts" and "cells" were established at Birjand and Nasyriyeh, Barfaroush, Zahedan (Duzdap), Meshed, Herat*, and possibly also at Bunder Pahlevi, and there was every indication that Moscow's intention was to make Persia a base for intensified Bolshevik propagandist activities in India. The existence of this intention is placed beyond doubt by a letter written by Rattan Singh from Germany to Gurmukh Singh in Kabul early in 1932. The writer described how the Comintern wanted him to work in Persia. He was to open channels of communication with India, as the Comintern did not wish the Soviet Embassies to be embarrassed by having to do this work, and he had agreed to go to Persia provided satisfactory arrangements were made for him, such as the provision of means to open a shop and to purchase a motor-car. He said that the documents regarding Persia had been signed by him and two members of the Comintern. With him was to be associated Teja Singh Sutanatar, who was being brought from South America specially for the purpose. Rattan Singh went on to explain that it was necessary for the *Ghadr* Party to keep in touch with Communist parties in all countries and to organise more thoroughly the peasants and labourers of India, for which purpose funds would be forthcoming. The rest of this letter dealt with Gurmukh Singh's work in Kabul, and it can, therefore, be dealt with more fittingly in the next chapter.

Rattan Singh is now in Europe and Gurmukh Singh has recently been deported from Afghanistan, but the scheme of which Rattan Singh spoke is, nevertheless, being put into operation. Fully authenticated documents have been brought to light to show that the Eastern Branch of the Comintern, working, probably, through the Soviet Consulate-General in Meshed, is in close touch with the Indian *Ghadr* Party in Persia and, through them, with the Punjabi equivalent—the *Kirti-Kisan Sabha*. "Thousands of *chervantsi* (roubles)". one such document

*Western Afghanistan.

reads, "are being sent to you by the first mail. Please convert them into *krons* and hand them over to No. 825 so that No. 920 may be able to go to India and distribute the money there." Another of the series reveals the fact that No. 825 is Abnashi Singh, a resident of the Jhelum district, whose passport had been cancelled on account of his Communist activities even before the existence of this evidence against him was known. No. 920 is Dheni Singh, a broker of Peshawar. Another passage which is of some importance runs as follows : "No. 920 arrived there (probably India). You need not worry about money ; the money-making machine is with me and has been brought there. There is no longer any need to send money through you (the addressee in this case is a Persian Jew in Meshed who, for five years prior to 1928, owned a carpet shop in Peshawar). I will send it to place 16 (Amritsar). . . . No. 24 wrote that he had not received at any time Rs. 20,000 at place No. 13 (Peshawar). Please tell No. 825 or No. 920 to send money to place 13 for No. 24. This should be done immediately." It remains only to say that most of the documents referred to were written in Russian, and almost certainly from Soviet territory, by a Jew who is known to be in Russian employ. The whole series made it very clear that the line of communication between Persia and India runs through Afghanistan. This is, of course, no new thing in Communist organisation in the Near and Middle East ; for as early as 1926, the Comintern, with its advanced base at Tashkent, had discerned three main lines of penetration, the central line through Afghanistan, the eastern line through Sinkiang and the western line through Persia. Zinoviev's description of this third channel has already been quoted—"the well-trodden paths to India through Persia and Afghanistan".

CHAPTER 5.

AFGHANISTAN.

Early Bolshevik Plans. After the failure of the attempt to bring about a revolution in Germany at the end of 1923, Communist leaders turned their attention more closely than ever towards the East and began preparations for an intensive campaign, with a view, primarily, to overthrow "British Imperialism" in India and Afghanistan, and to establish a "new extensive Muslim state, which would liberate millions of Indians from under the foreign yoke" and would receive the official support and recognition of the Soviet Union with its headquarters in Moscow. The prospective State was described as "a united Empire of Mussulman India and Afghanistan", and on the 14th January 1924, the Politbureau instructed the Soviet representative in Kabul that these were the lines on which he must work. Notwithstanding financial stringency in 1923, due to pressing needs in the West, a sum of 1,000,000 gold roubles (£100,000) was assured by the Executive Committee of the Communist International for the immediate necessities of the "Near-Central Eastern Section" with its headquarters at Tashkent. Half of this amount was for use in India and on her borders. At this time, too, Chicherin in Moscow said that the weapon of Afghanistan and the menace to British India of the Eastern Soviet Republics would have to be used "with caution and at the proper time"; also, that while the Soviet Government would have to refrain from an openly provocative policy, the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs would continue undeviatingly to carry out the mission entrusted to it of uniting the oppressed peoples of the East. Thenceforward there were notable signs of activity, at least in the way of the laying down of ambitious schemes, the dispatch of men and money, and the carrying on of propaganda.

Penetration of Afghanistan. In August 1924 the Executive Committee of the Communist International

issued instructions to Tashkent that a new propaganda base for northern Afghanistan should be established at Mazar-i-Sharif and that 10,000 proclamations should be issued in the name of the League of Defence or the Independence of Afghanistan with the object of inciting the Afghans to break with the British. Between February and October 1925 there was a steady increase in the number of Russians entering Afghanistan, ostensibly for commercial reasons, and throughout this period Afghanistan was being insidiously penetrated under cover of the new Turkestan Republics., which were being used to create movements in favour of the incorporation in the Soviet Union of the racially allied elements across the border, a process which clearly aimed at the expansion of the sphere of Moscow's influence in the direction of India and at the elimination of Afghanistan.

Soviet Elation. That the Communists were much encouraged by the seeming success of their venture will be apparent from the following extract from an issue of the *International Press Correspondence* which appeared at the beginning of this period and which furnishes an apt example of their propaganda : " The small country of Afghanistan heroically fighting for its independence and struggling desperately to rid itself of the remnants of mediæval feudalism, finds in the Union of Soviet Republics a trusty ally and a comrade who is prepared to defend it from the aggression of British Imperialism. The insurrection inspired and nourished by the ' Labour Government ' and headed by Prince Kherim Khan, who is aiming at the throne of Afghanistan, is serving still more to unite the Afghan people with the Union of Soviet Republics, which for many years has proved its sincere desire to help the people of Afghanistan to liberate themselves from the chains of feudalism and foreign intervention. The flight of the Red airmen, who, with the audacity of eagles, crossed the Hindu Kush into Afghanistan, serves as a symbol of the assistance which the victorious proletariat is prepared to lend the oppressed peoples of the East in their struggle against Imperialism. . . .

" The innumerable millions of toilers of India have, since the October revolution, ceased to fear that they

are alone in their fight against the British oppressors. They know that in the north a powerful force has sprung up and is ripening, a force capable of inspiring fear even in the heart of 'invincible' British Imperialism. The toilers of India know that the country of the Soviets is their one true and unselfish ally."

India The Objective. The prolonged campaign of anti-British propaganda of which this article was typical was followed, in December 1926, by secret instructions from the Eastern Department of the I. K. K. I. to Kabul which stressed the necessity for exposing alleged British designs on Afghanistan: "We instruct you immediately to organise an energetic campaign in all the districts against British Imperialism and their intrigues. It is essential that a convincing story should be widely circulated among the masses that in the State of Afghanistan a revolution is being prepared by British agents." There can be no doubt that Moscow regarded the penetration of Afghanistan as something that was likely to help forward their general policy in India and on her borders. The central idea behind it all seems to have been the sending out of trained agents, who would penetrate India and organise "cells" amongst labourers, soldiers and the indigenous elements of disorder for work on approved Bolshevik lines. In 1922, Moscow had attempted to suborn even the Indian National Congress, which considered an offer from Indians in Kabul to form a Congress Committee there and to raise a crore of rupees "from foreign sources". Some of the Comintern's other known plans were fantastic and visionary in the highest degree, but others appeared to be practical enough. One which definitely comes within the latter category, was drawn up for the Kabul centre in the autumn of 1925. A net-work of "cells" was to be set up in Central Afghanistan, Turkestan, Bokhara and Persia. These were to serve as clearing-houses for the passage of arms, literature and agents to India, and to forward correspondence from India to Kabul, Baku and Moscow and *vice versa*. A number of skilled Communist workers, mainly of Central Asiatic or Armenian origin (including specialists in the organisation of military "cells", propaganda, transport, communications and printing), were actually dispatched to these sub-

agencies, and funds were allotted for the printing in Kabul of propaganda in Indian vernaculars. A special effort was also made to overcome the difficulties experienced in sending agents into India, and in September 1925, a considerable sum of money was supplied to the Kabul centre for the purchase of Afghan passports for this purpose.

A Change of Policy. Some of the underhand methods which these Communist emissaries adopted irritated and alarmed the Afghans, and the consequent vigilance of the authorities was not without its effect. The attempt to secure a predominating position in the country and to oust British influence by the usual secret machinations miscarried, and as the chances of making Afghanistan into a Soviet State receded, other ways of tackling the problem were devised. A confession of failure was ultimately made at a meeting of the Eastern Control Commission of the I. K. K. I. in August 1926 when Osetrov said that "revolutionary and party work in the ordinary sense" were "out of place" in Afghanistan and that the main task was to put as much political pressure as possible on the Afghan Government. Work in Afghanistan was, therefore, reduced to two main tasks—anti-British propaganda and agitation in favour of a *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union. Appreciating the position in 1927, Sir David Petrie wrote: "That the Russians have spared no pains to launch ambitious plans in Afghanistan in furtherance of their schemes, which are primarily directed against India, may be accepted as beyond doubt; but that the results have been commensurate with the efforts made and the expenditure incurred is far less certain."

The Accession of Nadir Shah. Such influence and prestige as Moscow had obtained during Amanullah's régime disappeared with his abdication. Unlike his predecessor, the late King Nadir Shah took a serious view of Communist intrigue within his kingdom, whether directed against Britain or himself. At first he refused to allow the return of the Soviet Embassy to Kabul, but when his seat upon the throne had grown more secure, he revised this decision and the Embassy was re-established in 1930 along with the Consulates at Mazar, Maimana and

Herat. He refused to renew a contract which the previous Government had granted to a Russian aerial transport company to ply between Kabul and Termcz, though he allowed the service to continue until such time as the northern road was finally completed. All attempts on the part of the Soviet authorities to conclude a trade agreement and obtain certain monopolies covering the whole of Afghanistan were firmly resisted, and Moscow's efforts to recover her lost influence met with little success, except possibly in the northern province where Russian trade had all but captured the market for foreign goods by the end of 1932.

Leonide N. Stark. But the present Soviet Ambassador at Kabul is the same Leonide N. Stark (and his Counsellor is the same Colonel Rixe) whose financial relations with disaffected Indians were a source of some anxiety to the Indian authorities in 1925. It was hardly likely that men so skilled in Afghan affairs, and men, moreover, who had been in great measure responsible for the direction of Moscow's earlier efforts, would tamely submit to these new rebuffs. Their attempts to recover lost ground took three main lines, the fostering of propaganda in favour of ex-King Amanullah, the exploitation of every opportunity for internal penetration which current events might offer, and the cultivation of Indian revolutionaries.

Propaganda in Favour of Amanullah. There can be no doubt that Stark's masters in Moscow would welcome any change from the present régime and there are ample grounds for supposing that one direction in which the Soviet Embassy and its Consulates began working was towards fostering any movement which aimed at the subversion of the existing Government. If, thereafter, Amanullah were to return to the throne, well and good; if, as some seem to hope, a Republic were set up, better still. There was reason to believe, on the one hand, that the adherents of Amanullah, scattered all over Afghanistan, were being cherished by Stark (at any rate up to the beginning of 1933), and, on the other, to prove that Colonel Rixe was in touch with seditious Indians from the tribal territory, where schemes to subvert constituted authority are always welcome. The fact that, during a

recent pilgrimage to Mecca, Amanullah consorted with the Communist emissaries who forgather there each year lends support to the view that the Comintern was privy to the plot to replace him on his throne, and another straw which points in the same direction is the interesting statement in the letter from Rattan Singh to Gurmukh Singh which is mentioned elsewhere to the effect that the writer would shortly pay a visit to the late Mahmud Tarzi, the ex-King's father-in-law, in Germany. There were later indications that Rattan Singh actually met Amanullah in Italy in the summer of 1932. Intrigues in this connexion have continued both inside and outside Afghanistan during the past two years, but the Russian hand in them, has not been nearly so apparent as it was prior to 1933 and there is information to the effect that Moscow would now be willing to help Amanullah to return only as the President of a Republic. The failure of Amanullah's supporters to take advantage of the opportunities which the assassination of King Nadir Shah* presented to them has considerably limited their chances of success. These chances seem to grow less with each month that the new King (Zahir Shah) retains the throne, more particularly as the death of Mahmud Tarzi in Turkey in November 1933 removed one of the ablest supporters of the movement. But Amanullah still has a considerable body of adherents in Europe, India and Afghanistan itself, and propaganda is still being spread on his behalf by means of pamphlets, newspapers and even gramophone records. The real danger of this movement would seem to be, not so much a general, or even a tribal rising for Amanullah's cause, as that a few of his adherents may commit another murder and thus let loose those forces of disorder which are so near to the heart of the Communist International. Whether the Comintern will be in a position to take advantage of a revolution of this kind is another question ; and the answer to it must depend to a great extent on the success of Stark's efforts in other directions.

Attempts at Penetration. The second line which Soviet policy has taken in Afghanistan since 1930 has been the development of every opportunity for increasing Soviet influence in Afghanistan itself. I have already

*On the 8th November 1933.

mentioned Stark's previous failures to secure a trade agreement. His hopes in this direction were finally dispelled by the formation at the end of 1932 of the Ashami Company, a semi-official body in the conduct of whose affairs the Afghan Government has an effective voice. It is obviously impossible for a country so undeveloped as Afghanistan to sever all trade connexions with a formidable neighbour such as Russia, and the establishment of this new concern seems to have provided a satisfactory solution of a difficult problem. Founded somewhat on the Soviet model, the Ashami Company has been granted by the Government a monopoly for the purchase and import of the two commodities in which the Russians are primarily interested, sugar and petroleum products. It is noticeable that these are the only two articles of general use in which a monopoly has been granted and it is significant also that, while Soviet trading organisations can deal in these two commodities only with the Company, the Company is under no reciprocal obligation to deal in them only with Russian traders. Indeed, the Company continues to import considerable quantities of Java sugar and has recently concluded, through one of its subsidiaries, an agreement with the Burma Shell Company for the purchase of a large annual supply of petrol. The menace of Soviet economic penetration has thus been effectively countered, and the recent appearance of Japanese goods in the Afghan market (particularly in the north) at prices which compare very favourably with those of Russian products has made matters still more difficult for Stark and his commercial advisers.

Other Methods. The Soviet authorities seem to have acquiesced in their failure to obtain better results—indeed there was little else that they could do—and to have settled down to make the most of such other openings for penetrative tactics as may come their way. Immediately after the formation of the Ashami Company there was much coming and going of Russian commercial representatives and these were supplemented shortly afterwards by an ingenious device which rejoiced in the name of the “locust mission”. Alleging that the Afghan insect was seriously affecting the planned* returns in fertile Russian

*The reference is to the second Five Year Plan.

territory across the border, the Soviet authorities put pressure on the Afghan Government to accept a mission of half a dozen specialists, with a staff of some twenty subordinates, to supervise the destruction of the Afghan locust in its breeding places. The whole of the personnel of this mission is said on sound authority to belong to the "Party" and the head of it is a Communist of some prominence. It is hardly surprising, in view of its reported activities in directions other than its official duties, that the Afghan authorities firmly resisted a later proposal that its numbers should be very considerably augmented.

The Continuance of Indian Sedition. The third string to Stark's bow was the gathering around him of the remnants of those Indian anti-British elements which abounded in Afghanistan during Amanullah's reign. Organisations such as the Hindustani Falatics' Colony at Chamarkand and the Indian National Club in Kabul were amongst the few organisations which survived the 1929 revolution. The temporary disappearance of foreign control and the still more important absence of Communist money rendered them largely innocuous from the British Indian point of view, but the welding of the old coterie into a new and active body was a matter of no great difficulty. Mullah Bashir, Mir Rahmatullah Humayun, Gurmukh Singh, to mention only a few of the score of names which figured in Sir David Petrie's book, were all ready to resume their old relations with the Soviet Embassy and readier still to accept Communist money. But in this direction, too, there has been a change for the better during recent years. Mullah Bashir has died. Gurmukh Singh and his fellow members of the *Ghadr* Party have been arrested and deported whenever they have been discovered in Afghanistan and, most significant of all, Rahmatullah Humayun has recently decided to cut adrift from his old associates and to return to India on pledges of good behaviour. It would be pessimistic not to believe that he has come to the conclusion that the anti-British game which he has been playing for the last fourteen years is not worth the candle.

Mitha Singh. It is a little difficult to account for this sudden change of attitude on the part of the Afghan

authorities, who have always displayed considerable reluctance to take any action which might be described by their political opponents as "subservience to the British". It is possible that it was Mitha Singh's complicity in terrorist activities in Afghanistan that brought home to the Government the dangers of allowing Indian malcontents freedom to engage in their subversive plots in Afghan territory. This Frontier Sikh first came to unfavourable notice as a deserter from the Indian Army. After the War he settled down in Berlin where he spent some years trying to extend the German business connexions of a firm in Kabul, owned by Wasdev Singh (*alias* Ishar Singh), which was used by Rattan Singh as a post-box for correspondence between himself and *Ghadr* conspirators in various parts of the world and also as a cover for such conspirators' secret activities. Taking to himself a German wife, Mitha Singh migrated in 1930 through Russia to Kabul, where he later opened a tea-shop which became the fashionable centre for young Afghans who had been educated in Germany, or in the German schools in Kabul, to meet and exchange reminiscences of Berlin. It was this German clique which was held responsible for the murder of the Afghan Minister at Berlin on the 6th June 1933 and for the triple murder which occurred in the British Legation in Kabul three months later. No arrests appear to have been made in connexion with the first of these crimes, but shortly after the occurrence of the second a large number of persons were arrested on charges of treason and attempted subversion of the existing Government. There followed a few days later the execution of several highly placed persons who had held important official appointments in Amanullah's time. King Nadir Shah's Government seemed to see in these outrages, and in the intensification of pro-Amanullah propaganda which immediately succeeded them, the first-fruits of the late Ghulam Nabi's* plans for rebellion and for usurpation of power in Amanullah's favour. The correctness of their view was more or less established by the fact that it was a member of this German clique (the late Ghulam Nabi's son) who eventually assassinated King Nadir Shah two months later. Mitha Singh's part in the conspiracy

*Executed in November 1932.

seems to have been that of postman between the clique which used his tea-shop as a meeting place and certain of the leaders of the movement who were confined in Kabul jail and also between both these groups' and Amanullah's immediate following in Europe. The investigation of the murders at the British Legation was said to have revealed a considerable amount of correspondence which turned suspicion of Mitha Singh into certainty, and his arrest came as a natural sequel. Of his present connexion with the *Ghadr* Party there is less certain proof, but the Afghan authorities seem to have been satisfied that his former associates were also undesirable characters whom it would be safer to keep under restraint.

Gurmukh Singh and Rattan Singh. Those already in Kabul when the Soviet Embassy reopened there in 1930 were joined shortly afterwards by the notorious Rattan Singh *alias* Santa Singh *alias* Isher Singh. Rattan Singh emigrated to the Fiji Islands in 1914 and went thence to Vancouver, where he joined the American *Ghadr* Party in 1920. He quickly assumed a position of considerable prominence in Sikh circles in America and showed himself to be a dangerous member of the Party. He visited Moscow in 1923, from where he was sent in company with Santokh Singh on a Communist mission to India. The part which he played in the general Sikh conspiracy against India is a subject which must be left for later treatment, but the more recent activities of this desperado and of Gurmukh Singh (another dangerous and prominent member of the *Ghadr* Party, who broke jail in India and escaped to Afghanistan in 1923) as the leaders of the remnants of the Indian Club in Kabul can, I think, more fittingly be disposed of here.

Rattan Singh's Reappearance. The news of Stark's return to Afghanistan and of the resumption of his former relations with anti-British elements there brought Rattan Singh from South America, where he was working at the time, to Berlin. Arriving there at the beginning of August 1930, he awaited definite instructions from San Francisco, but betrayed an anxiety to push on to Kabul as rapidly as possible. The success of the civil disobedience movement in that year; the general impetus

which it gave to all Indian subversive movements both at home and abroad ; and the serious trouble which began in Peshawar in April, and spread in succeeding months to tribal territory as well,—had convinced him, as indeed, it had convinced many others of his way of thinking, that an opportunity had come too valuable to be lost. Every possible form of assistance must, therefore, immediately be given to the subversive elements on both sides of the Indian frontier in order to keep the British occupied on every front simultaneously.

Discussions in Moscow. Rattan Singh received his expected orders and left for Moscow *en route* for Afghanistan. He spent some weeks discussing the *Ghadr* Party's plans with the leaders of the Comintern and eventually arrived in Kabul in December 1930. As a result of these discussions he sent word to the leaders in California to cancel their proposal to send students to Italy for military training ; such students should be sent to Moscow instead. This advice was, as a matter of fact, at first resented in San Francisco as revealing the "dictatorial attitude" of the Comintern, which was said to have "issued its orders through Rattan Singh". Rattan Singh also received instructions from the Comintern to infuse greater life into the *Ghadr* Party's propaganda in general, and, in particular, to take the line of denouncing Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru. He was interested to hear also that some Sikh students were shortly expected to arrive there from India for the usual course of training.

Operations in Kabul. Arrived in Kabul, he wrote, after consultation with Gurmukh Singh, a series of letters to San Francisco which showed that he was attempting to marshal all the anti-British elements for an ultimate attack on the frontier. He asked that certain other important Sikh revolutionaries, whose names he mentioned, be sent to assist him, and there is some evidence, too, of his having established touch with Congressmen and *Khilafatists* in India and tribal territory. He later dispatched Gurmukh Singh and Wasdev Singh to India, where they are said to have attended the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Karachi in March 1931, and was also able to send advice

and instructions to the numerous Sikhs who returned to the Punjab from America during 1930 and 1931.

A Projected Rising. Somewhat vague information was received at the beginning of 1931 that plans were being developed by certain elements ill-disposed towards the British Government, for an invasion of India from the North-West Frontier to take place simultaneously with widespread internal trouble, particularly in the Punjab. It was stated that the enemies of Britain had placed a very large sum of money at the disposal of the notorious Haji of Turangzai, who they believed to have a following large enough to attempt such an invasion. It was proposed that the internal rising should begin with the murder of Europeans, the cutting of telegraph wires, and the blowing up of railway bridges. It was also anticipated that this rising, which was timed to take place in March of that year, would have the active support of Indian revolutionaries, disaffected returned emigrants, and dissatisfied ex-soldiers. This information, received from a source whose veracity was doubtful, would hardly be worthy of consideration were it not for the fact that information was subsequently received on the same subject from sources of greater reliability. For example, there is the fact that an Indian, who was in close touch with Communist activities in Moscow, wrote at the end of 1930 that mass terrorism had been arranged in India and also that further serious trouble would take place on the frontier in the following March or April. It is known, too, that the Kabul branch of the *Ghadr* Party made persistent endeavours at about this time to secure large-scale maps of India and adjacent countries and plans of the frontier forts, as well as mobilization schemes and other items of military information regarding the North-West Frontier.

A More Concrete Proposal. In one way or another, therefore, a considerable volume of interdependent evidence accumulated during 1930 and the early part of 1931 to prove that this knot of half-terrorist, half-Communist Indian revolutionaries in Kabul was in close and constant touch with the *Ghadr* headquarters in San Francisco on the one side and with Moscow on the other. A steady stream of correspondence between these two

places and Afghanistan, and thence onward to the Punjab as well, showed that the Kabul centre had regained much of its former importance as a base for subversive propaganda in India. This correspondence also told of several active plans. Of a large variety of such schemes, I will content myself with the examination of only one (of the genuineness of which there is no question) which may be taken as typical of them all. The Indian revolutionaries in Kabul proposed to purchase and import a considerable quantity of arms, comprising both machine-guns and hand-grenades, from America into Kabul on behalf of the Afghan Government. The ultimate idea, as it was revealed by the correspondence in question, was that a certain residuum of these arms would be retained and smuggled into India, where they would be devoted to the purposes of the *Ghadr* Party and its allies. This plan was to mature at the beginning of 1931 (to synchronize, presumably, with the projected rising already mentioned), and it should be mentioned that negotiations had reached an advanced stage before the scheme was eventually frustrated by resort to diplomatic channels.

The Communist Motif. It must be remembered, of course, that the Sikh members of the group in Kabul technically belonged to the *Ghadr* Party in America, the completeness of whose allegiance to the Comintern has always varied in proportion to the state of its finances at a given time. But the sources from which a good deal of the information about them came tended to emphasize the Communist complexion of their activities. This is not surprising. Several of the most active had been to Moscow at one time or another and were known to be in clandestine communication with Stark and Rixe, and these two facts alone laid the group open to charges of conspiring with the Communist International. Proof of Moscow's complicity does not rest solely upon the suspicions of intelligence agents, however; there is more convincing evidence, which, though it deals with a somewhat later period, loses none of its force on that account.

Rattan Singh's Letter. The letter from Rattan Singh to Gurmukh Singh which was referred to in the previous chapter, gives a particularly clear insight into the workings of the Soviet Embassy in Kabul, as, indeed,

it does into many other aspects of the Comintern's intrigues. Writing from Berlin on the 20th March 1932, Rattan Singh warned Gurmukh Singh to be careful of what he wrote in his letters as the Russians insisted on full translations, and it was unwise for him to criticise the Soviet Government; nor should the Russian officials in the Soviet Embassy in Kabul be the subject of any adverse remarks. He explained that the *Ghadr* Party's dealings were with the Comintern and not with the Soviet Government, and that it was the latter which controlled the Embassy. He added, however, that the *Ghadr* Party could let the Embassy know what persons in Kabul were likely to work against the Party's interests and that the Embassy could then be left to deal with them. He said that the Comintern was well acquainted with affairs in Afghanistan and other places and that the Soviet were fully informed of British machinations in that country, but had no wish to start a war. He informed Gurmukh Singh that he had sent him one letter through the Soviet Embassy and another via India, but had not written more because Ishar Singh, *alias* Wasdev Singh (of whom more anon), was on his way to Kabul and would communicate many other things to him verbally. He had also sent some newspapers through Colonel Rixe, the Counsellor.

Rattan Singh referred to the *Ghadr* Party's shortage of funds and was particularly emphatic that it was necessary to remain on good terms with the Comintern, in spite of the fact that the latter had made promises which they had failed to honour. One particular reason why a continuance of friendly relations was so necessary was that he attached great importance to the arrival of young enthusiasts from the Argentine and elsewhere for training in Moscow's academies. They would, he thought, be able to do very good work in India thereafter. Finally, he mentioned the names of certain known Communist agents in Afghanistan who were "good men" but "had nothing to do with the *Ghadr* Party's work" and advised Gurmukh Singh of the dispatch of funds in the name of Rahmatullah Humayun. The remainder of the letter discussed Rattan Singh's proposed work in Persia and has already been dealt with

in the appropriate place. It may be mentioned that the letter did not actually include all the names alluded to, but it has been possible, in every case, to determine with a considerable degree of accuracy the identity of each person mentioned in the somewhat cryptic language employed. Of the authenticity of the letter itself there is no doubt whatsoever.

Afghan Intervention. It was not, however, left to the British authorities alone to combat this menace. At a comparatively early stage in the proceedings the Afghan Government recognized the dangers to its own well-being of the disturbance of the independent tribes and later on, as I have shown, they came to take a serious view of all the activities of this dangerous group of revolutionaries. Rattan Singh had been warned while he was in Moscow that Nadir Shah's attitude was most unsatisfactory and that he (Rattan Singh) might even be expelled from Afghan territory. This fate eventually befell him and he left Kabul for Russia on the 2nd November 1931. His place was taken by Wasdev Singh *alias* Ishar Singh, a brother-in-law of the notorious Teja Singh Sutantar. Although Wasdev Singh was one of the chief conspirators in the Kabul of Amanullah's days, and was reported in 1926 to be employed by the Bolsheviks as a secret service agent, his assumption of charge, after a period of training in Moscow, was accompanied by a decline rather than an increase in *Ghadr* activities in Afghanistan. He eventually made his way to India where he was arrested in June 1933 and placed in confinement. At the beginning of the same year Gurmukh Singh was deported by the Afghan authorities to Russia together with one of his confederates, but five months later he was again found close to the eastern frontier making his way to India in disguise. With him on this occasion was another important revolutionary named Prithi Singh. Both were arrested and deported to Russia some ten months later, in July 1934, and at the time of writing the Indian Communist group in Kabul has thus been rendered more or less innocuous.

The Future. It is always an unwelcome task to venture into the hazardous realm of prophecy, and the feat becomes almost impossible when the subject is the

political future of a country such as Afghanistan. It may be asserted with some degree of confidence that the present satisfactory state of affairs will continue for so long as the present régime lasts, but few will deny, on the other hand, that the present Government's tenure of office is somewhat precarious. The assassination of the new King ; the murder of the Prime Minister ; a tribal rising ; a sudden deterioration of the already unsatisfactory economic situation ; ill-judged executive or administrative action, even of a minor character ;—any of these might well result in the letting loose of those forces which have been the cause of so much trouble in Afghanistan during the past seven years. And around this bubbling cauldron hovers the pervasive spirit of Moscow, ever ready to assume more material form and to appear in the rôle of fairy godmother, as the supplier of finances, technical advisers, munitions, to whichever of the various groups seems at the time to hold out the greatest prospect of an adequate return for the expenditure involved. This was the history of the Armenian Republic of Transcaucasia and the Chinese Soviet Republic ; it is the history of the republic now in the making in Sinkiang ; and the Comintern's writings of which I have quoted a few examples leave no doubt that Moscow has foreordained it as the history of Afghanistan as well. Stark's recent failures and the Afghan policy which has caused them cannot, therefore, be hailed with untempered enthusiasm. Given the like opportunity, it is but a step from the domination of Sinkiang to that of Afghanistan ; and those parts of King Zahir Shah's dominion which lie to the north of the Hindu Kush, surrounded as they are by spheres of Soviet influence, present as difficult an administrative problem to his cabinet as they did to Amanullah and his predecessors in Czarist days. Kabul may issue decrees, but that does not mean that the outer regions will heed them.

CHAPTER 6.

SINKIANG AND TIBET.

Soviet Designs in Central Asia. To the east of Afghanistan there lies a little known province of China of which Urumchi is the capital. Bounded on three sides by Russian territory and on the south by the mountains of Tibet and Kashmir it is connected with China proper only by a narrow tongue of land—the Chinese province of Kansu. Its predominantly Muslim population comprises a large number of different tribes and races ranging from those of Mongol origin in the north and east to those of Turkish descent in the south-west. The tribes with which this chapter is mainly concerned may be grouped into two classes—the Tungans (Chinese converts to Islam) whose stronghold is in the south-east of the province and the Turkis who inhabit the large horseshoe of oases of which the rest of the province is made up. A glance at the map at the end of this book will make more apparent the difficulties of the Nanking Government in administering so remote and isolated a region and more surprising the fact that Sinkiang has remained a part of the Chinese Empire for the past five centuries or more. No less than its Czarist predecessor, the Soviet Government has had designs on this fertile but undeveloped region, rich in mineral ores and oil, from the earliest days of the Communist régime, and as far back as 1924 the area was marked on intelligence maps as a projected Soviet Socialist Republic. This being so, an early absence of information about Russian doings there was somewhat disconcerting. What little was recorded revealed a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs, which fact was fully confirmed when an experienced observer with an intimate knowledge of the country and its people visited this virtual no-man's land at the end of 1930. His report on what he saw and heard there is too long for incorporation in a work of this nature and it must suffice to quote a few important extracts from it.

“ It is apparently not realised in India or England ”, he wrote, “ what a real menace the Soviet is in Central Asia. East of a line running north and south through

Peshawar there is no system of intelligence at all, and yet the territories that border on India are the arena of active open anti-British propaganda, and it is a grievous mistake to imagine that those subversive intrigues are unsuccessful and harmless. . . . It requires no great effort of the imagination to realize the danger of unchecked red intrigue in India, Tibet, and the border States and districts of Chitral, Punial, *et cetera*. . . . Unquestionably, much of the Bolshevik intrigue is clumsy and muddle-headed, though more so to us than to the people for whom it is produced ; but it certainly achieves a considerable measure of success, being most seductive and pernicious, and far from deserving of contempt." The writer went on to say that a review of the past five years in Sinkiang only emphasized the steady growth of Bolshevik influence to the detriment of British interests. It was not reasonable to expect that Russia could be kept in the state of subjection in which she found herself when Soviet consulates were first established there, but the ease with which she had recovered her position in Central Asia was due in no small measure to a mistaken policy of *laissez faire*.

The First Step Towards Soviet Domination.

Shortly after these words were written, Moscow's increasing efforts were rewarded by the conclusion of a trade agreement with the local Chinese rulers, which removed all tariff restrictions, gave to Soviet representatives greater freedom of movement and opened up communication with Russia. Encouraged by Russian subsidies, the development of trade proceeded apace, and Moscow's influence advanced from strength to strength, until the Bolshevik menace became a matter of primary concern as much for India as for China ; and its reality was considerably enhanced by the presence on the Sino-Russian frontier of considerable Soviet forces to support the diplomatic prestige of the Soviet Consul-General at Urumchi and to add to the growing weight of Russian economic pressure.

India the Objective. The inferences to be drawn from these signs of activity are obvious enough. One was put into words by a Russian newspaper, *Echo*, in Shanghai as long ago as May 1928 : " Now that they

(the Bolsheviks) have taken possession of the region, they know that by doing so they are becoming directly connected with northern India *via* Kuldja, Aksu, Kashgar, and on to the Pamirs. From Sinkiang there are several routes to India, but the best for the Bolsheviks is one situated near the border. From the above information it is seen that the Bolsheviks are not losing time and are forwarding in the direction of India large quantities of Communist literature, ammunition, and other supplies. With the seizure of Sinkiang, the Bolsheviks have solved the problem of close proximity to British India: now, if they succeed in obtaining influence in Afghanistan, the whole of northern India will be in a circle of Communist territory and consequences will show sooner or later."

Relations with Nanking. Ever since the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1912, Sinkiang has grown more and more independent of the Central Government and has been ruled by a virtual military dictatorship which, while it has owned nominal allegiance to Nanking, has paid scant attention to instructions or suggestions which emanated from that quarter. The first of these dictators (who ruled with fair success) having been removed by assassination, his place was taken by General Chin Shu-Jen who, in addition to being a poor administrator, was thoroughly oppressive and corrupt. Both these early dictators made the mistake of interfering with Muhammadan social customs and, in particular, of depriving the Tungan tribesmen of hereditary rights which they had held from time immemorial and which they had always been allowed to retain under the Emperors. Chin Shu-Jen still further incensed Muslim opinion by attempting to sequester the estate of a local Muslim prince. Muslim feeling ran high and the conclusion of the trade agreement mentioned above, which came as a fitting climax to Chin's subservience to the U. S. S. R., proved to be the signal for revolt. Chin was compelled to abdicate in April 1933 and was later handed over to the Nanking authorities for trial on charges of insubordination and disloyalty*. When he left Urumchi, Sinkiang was in a grave state of anarchy with different elements in the province struggling for power

*Chin Shu Jen was later sentenced to 3½ years' imprisonment.

or independence. The provincial Government passed into the hands of two men, civil authority to an old Tungan, moderate and well liked by all sections, and military control to Sheng Shih-Tsai, a young ambitious Chinese general from a more easterly part of the Republic, whose popularity was by no means so universal. The former's efforts at conciliating the various discordant elements met with a considerable measure of success and the civil administration showed signs of improvement; but the latter set himself the task of subduing the various rebellious generals and chieftains in different parts of the country.

The Genesis of the Recent Rebellion. The series of risings to which Chin Shu-Jen's misdemeanours gave birth really began with a Tungan revolt in the summer of 1931 under General Ma Chung-Ying, the dashing young Tungan who came from Kansu at the request of some of the most influential Muslim leaders with the object of freeing Sinkiang, alike from Russian interference and from the tyranny of the Urumchi Government, and of establishing instead an autonomous Muslim State within the Chinese Republic. General Ma established himself in the east of the province and was only prevented from attacking (and probably capturing) Urumchi by an eleventh-hour decision by the provincial authorities to enlist White Russians (of whom there was a considerable colony at Kuldja) to stiffen the ranks of the degenerate Chinese armies in the field. Though General Chin was thus enabled to stave off the attack on his headquarters, he did not inflict anything in the nature of a serious defeat on his rival, who still retained much of his former strength in the eastern districts. The banner of revolt then spread to the south and west until, by the spring of 1933, the whole country was covered with disjointed groups of rebellious tribesmen whose sole common aim seemed to be to shake themselves free, not so much of Chinese suzerainty (as represented by distant Nanking) as of the oppressive dictatorship in which they were enthralled. Some even declared themselves ready to accept control from Nanking, provided that the religious and social rights and customs of the Muslim population were respected.

Russian Aid to the Rebels. The natural inclination of the Soviet Government (as the tool of the

Comintern) was to lend its moral and material support to the forces of revolt, but there were several complicating factors which made the application of the standard Communist policy a matter of some difficulty. There is, for instance, a considerable racial overlap of the tribesmen in Sinkiang with those in the bordering Soviet Republics to the north and west. Indeed, the Turki population contains a by no means inconsiderable element of Russia's own discontented tribesmen who have migrated into Chinese territory from time to time since the formation of the Kirghiz and Tajik Soviet Republics. The indiscriminate supply of arms and ammunition to the rebels might, therefore, have had undesirable repercussions in Russian territory and, though Russian armaments were forthcoming, they were given only to those leaders who were considered trustworthy and, even then, only with the clear stipulation that they were not to be handed on to other tribesmen, such as the Kirghiz and Andjanis, of whose reliability Moscow entertained justifiable doubts. The chief of the favoured leaders was Khoja Niaz whose principal asset from the Communist point of view was that he was a simple man surrounded by pro-Bolshevik advisers. His representatives were called to Tashkent and Moscow and after protracted negotiations, the flow of Russian rifles and cartridges began. A good illustration of the operation of Communist policy at that time is provided by a reliable report to the effect that the leaders in the south, whose following included a considerable number of Russian refugees, were reprimanded by Khoja Niaz' "commander-in-chief" for their inactivity. Their reply was that they had no cartridges. A few boxes were later sent to them, but an immediate protest from the Soviet trade agent in Kashgar effectively prevented the dispatch of further supplies.

Russian Aid to the Chinese. It was at this juncture, then, that Chin Shu-Jen was forced to abdicate and that his military successor, Sheng Shih-Tsai assumed control. His power being greatly strengthened at about this time by the addition to his forces of some 8,000 "volunteers" who had been driven by the Japanese from Manchuria into Soviet territory and who were allowed to proceed to Sinkiang at this crucial moment. General Shen was able, in the course of several encounters, to deal

effectively with his enemies in the north. But Ma Chung-Ying in the east proved a more difficult proposition. His offensive operations in the vicinity of Urunchi so menaced the provincial capital that General Sheng ultimately invoked and obtained Russian assistance to the extent (according to some reports) of four or five aeroplanes and some 4,000 Soviet troops of one sort or another, together with an inestimable amount of arms and munitions which are said to have included bombs, machine-guns and hand-grenades. Japanese newspapers alleged that a number of Soviet military officers had also been sent to Sinkiang to act as Sheng's military advisers and to undertake the training of his troops and, although it is difficult to be as categorical on this point as on others, it seems likely that it was so. Only then, in December 1933, was Ma Chung-Ying finally driven out of his stronghold in the east, but though his forces were severely routed, he himself escaped and fled with a small but efficient and well-equipped following, not to his native Kansu but to the west, towards Kashgar.

“ The Independent Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkistan ”. While the Tungans and the Chinese provincial troops were thus occupied in the east, the various rebel groups in the south-west composed their differences and combined to proclaim a local independent Muslim Republic. This combination was largely the result of the efforts of certain Turkish free-lances who had found their way into Sinkiang during the previous summer and to whom much of the plan and the organisation of the new Republic was due. Khoja Niaz was nominated its president without his previous consent and decided, despite the absence of complete accord with the chief promoters of the new government, to accept the office, and the Republic was duly inaugurated at Kashgar on the 12th November 1933. (It should be mentioned that the principal cause for disagreement with Khoja Niaz was that he had strayed so far from the path of Islam as openly to confess sympathy with the anti-religious Communists.) The new Republic seemed to be based on sound theoretical principles, even if it lacked the power to put many of them into immediate practice, and its agents left for India

and Afghanistan to enlist Muhammadan and official sympathy and to obtain recognition if possible. But it was obvious from the first that the new Prime Minister would have considerable difficulty in handling the various tribes, many of them at loggerheads with each other and all of them seeking to gain the upper hand and suitable opportunities for profit. A growing distrust of Khoja Niaz' pro-Soviet policy by no means decreased his difficulties, and the early demise of the infant Republic became more or less of a certainty before 1933 ended.

The Tungan Conquest of the South. At the beginning of 1934, therefore, there were three main parties in the field—the Chinese troops supported by Russia and based on Urumchi, the Tungans under Ma Chung-Ying who had been driven into the central plateau, and a composite body of Turki tribesmen in the south and west of whom Khoja Niaz was the nominal head. Although Khoja Niaz seems to have been one of those who invited Ma Chung-Ying's co-operation in the early days of 1931, it appears that he later entered into a separate secret agreement with Urumchi and deserted the general Muslim cause. The exact truth will probably never be known, but of a number of suggested explanations of his subsequent conduct, the above seems best to fit the facts, and would, indeed, be a natural corollary to his acceptance of Russian assistance. But whatever the truth, it was certainly in this belief that General Ma, having collected and reorganised his troops, set out westward in January 1934 to conquer the south of the province. After a first reverse at Aksu, which lies about half-way between Urumchi and Kashgar, Khoja Niaz was compelled to retire with his Turki following on the latter city. From there he fled a month later, without offering any resistance, further to the south and the Tungans occupied the city. Early in April General Ma himself arrived in Kashgar and lost no time in extending Tungan influence in the surrounding country. Sarikol on the Afghan border was captured with little difficulty and a Tungan expedition to the south met with little resistance and peacefully occupied Yarkand and Khotan. Peace representatives were sent in all directions and General Ma applied himself to the task of restoring peaceful conditions and consolidating his position. His plan was to put an end to

civil war in the south and so present a united front to whatever force might approach from Urumchi. Thus alone could south Sinkiang be saved from Russian influence. He set up a military training school in Kashgar and busied himself with the enlistment and intensive training of troops which were then sent to garrison the various towns of which he had obtained control. Surrenders by Turki tribesmen still further strengthened his hand and it looked at the end of June as though he had obtained indisputable possession of the whole south-western part of Sinkiang.

Soviet Interference. It seems that at this stage the Soviet authorities considered that their ends would best be served if peace were restored and rumours of impending negotiations became current in Kashgar from the end of May onwards. Early in July a dramatic change took place. After a visit to the Soviet Consulate in Kashgar, General Ma suddenly withdrew all his forces to Yarkand and Khotan, and was himself escorted by members of the Soviet Consulate, in peculiar circumstances savouring of Communist intrigue, to the Russian frontier, since when nothing has been heard of him. A few days later, a news agency in Moscow gave to the world a highly garnished account of his mysterious disappearance which stated that he was "disarmed and interned when he crossed the Soviet frontier in flight after a battle with Chinese troops". Opposition thus removed, General Sheng's troops, by now augmented by some of Khoja Niaz' following, made a leisurely advance which culminated in their occupation of Kashgar at the end of the month, and Urumchi's control was thus re-established over the whole province, with the exception of the region in the extreme south-west to which the Tungans had withdrawn.

The Price of Russian Assistance. The successful rehabilitation of the Urumchi Government had, of course, been possible only with Russian assistance, the cost of which now became apparent. In the wake of the victorious Government troops there followed the establishment of Russian influence (with all its disadvantages and alleged advantages) such as had never been felt in Sinkiang before. Soviet agents arrived in increasing

numbers and they and their nominees began to find their way into the machinery of the administration. Gold was drained from the people by means of taxes, loans or forced subscriptions, paper money flooded the country and its acceptance at face value was enforced by most barbaric methods, currency was inflated to an absurd degree and finally came crashing down when one note issue after another was repudiated. A modified form of State trading was introduced and individual trade was banned. In some areas in the north as much as nine-tenths of the local produce is said to have been appropriated by the State. The export of gold or silver (except to Russia) was forbidden and, while hundreds of caravans of wool and cotton left for Russian territory, Russian officials who had assumed what was said to be temporary control of the customs barrier at Yarkand succeeded in effectually preventing any trade with India. Pilgrims were dissuaded from proceeding to Mecca via India and were advised instead to pass through Russian territory and to pay for their expenses in raw material. The force of this suggestion was enhanced by the fact that the main route to India (which runs close to the Russian border) was rendered unsafe by looting and banditry which went on to an unprecedented degree. Some at least of the arms which these bandits used were of Russian origin. Schools were opened in several parts of the province at which regular lectures were given on the essential equality of all classes and the two sexes and on the harm which is done by religious bigotry. In some places detailed enquiries were instituted into the amount of land owned by each person and the number of occupants of each house. In others, committees were appointed for the spending of religious endowments, for the promotion of drama and recreation, of education, of athletics, of publications, etc., the members of which were either persons who had been expelled in the old days for their Communist practices or those who had been educated outside Sinkiang. Numbers of this latter class returned from Tashkent, and other Russian educational centres, their places being taken by further batches of Turki boys. There may also be some truth in the confident assertions made by the Japanese press that Russian aerodromes and aircraft works are now being established in the north of the province and that the White Russian troops,

now more or less a permanent feature of Sinkiang politics, are officered by Bolsheviki. It is certain that many White Russians have been wrested from their Turki employers and sent to Urumchi where the Communist grip is tightest. It is difficult to say what their fate has been, but stories are everywhere current of the execution of those who are still so obstinate as to refuse to believe that a Communist régime is the unmixed blessing which its originators claim it to be.

The Campaign Against Britain. It will have been obvious in more ways than one that much of the Communist attack was directed against British interests. The imposition of high rates of import and export duty at Yarkand and the blocking of the main route to India through Gilgit are cases in point. The rights of British-Indian subjects in the interior no longer receive the respect which they did under the old régime and their interests suffer without redress. But the attempt to do injury to Britain does not stop there. Throughout the whole campaign, the Communist press in various parts of the world kept up a barrage of lying propaganda against Great Britain and the British in India. Thus *Pravda*, the organ of the Communist Party of Russia, contained a series of reports alleging that Britain intended to "subdue Sinkiang, which is contiguous to the Soviet frontier and to use it for anti-Soviet intrigues". The British and Afghan Governments were also accused of supplying arms to the rebels, an act which was described as a wanton attack on Russia's ally, China. A third example is to be found amongst the published speeches delivered at the Anti-War Congress in Amsterdam in August 1932. In the course of a lengthy harangue, Rattan Singh, "delegate from the Hindustan *Ghadr* Party and the Punjab Workers' and Peasants' Party" and a man to whose words close association with the Communist International gives special emphasis, remarked that, "Or the other side, the neighbouring Governments of India, Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet have been bought by the British Imperialists. The Lama of Tibet is already at war against China at the instigation of Britain. The British armies are awaiting orders to enter Chinese Turkistan from Gilgit, Leh and Chitral cantonments in order to

occupy Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar, the strategical points at the Soviet frontier. Many spies and agents are already at work in that territory to do the spade work for the British occupation." Lying propaganda of this kind was, of course, intended to divert attention from the Soviet's own activities in Sinkiang, but the results which attended the circulation of similar falsehoods in Yunnan during 1926* seem to invest such campaigns of calumny with a special significance which it would be unwise to disregard.

Conclusions. The gradual elimination of his enemies in the field not only strengthened Sheng Shih-Tsai's position greatly but also gave him more time. The result was that he gradually took over the whole of the civil administration from his Tungan colleague, whom he finally placed under detention in Urumchi in September 1934. He has recently carried out a complete reorganisation of his military forces, which are now said to be formed into twenty-five regiments recruited on a racial basis, and has opened a military academy in Urumchi for the training of officers. He has shown even less respect for the Central Government than his predecessors, and it is improbable that he will depart, even if he wished it, from Chin Shu-Jen's policy of subservience to the Soviet authorities. Where this will eventually lead him it is impossible to say with certainty, but a comparison of the communications existing on the west and north of Sinkiang with those to the east and south is almost sufficient for a prediction of the ultimate fate of the province. If the administration continues to receive the support necessary to maintain itself, the present trend of events has every appearance of leading to its eventual, if not immediate, sovietization—whether as a part of the U. S. S. R. or on the Mongolian analogy is immaterial. In either case the Russian border will march with that of India for the first time in history. It is true that the mighty Karakoram, the greatest mountain wall in the world, separates Sinkiang from Kashmir, but, in the words of a recent article in the *London Times*, "it is as well to remember that these huge mountain walls were as penetrable to the forays and excursions of Daulat Beg's fifteenth-century Moghals as they were to the

**Vide* pages 66-7.

evangelists of the Gautama before him". There is possibly some comfort in the thought that it is the Tungans who now occupy the territory around Khotan and that it is they who have shown the greatest hostility of all to the growth of Communist influence.

Communist Designs on Tibet. The next country on the "line of march" is Tibet, a region much less inviting than Sinkiang, a bleak and barren upland which offers little possibility of economic development. But Moscow has not neglected her any more than she has other countries of the East. From time to time since 1922 Communist emissaries and deputations have visited Lhasa, the most recent having arrived there at the beginning of 1932. Another, who was instructed first to establish contact with certain lamas in Mongolia, left China in the middle of 1933 and has not been heard of since. Such visits have seldom been made empty-handed and, although it is extremely difficult to keep track of such people once they enter Outer Mongolia or Tibet, yet sufficient is known of their purposes to support the general statement that they have been sent in the hope that they might generate and support pro-Soviet feeling amongst influential Tibetans. One such mission, which arrived in Lhasa in May 1927, took with it four machine-guns and 200 rifles for presentation to the Dalai Lama in return for which it was hoped that a Russo-Tibetan alliance would be made. Fortunately, these particular overtures produced little or no effect, but some light is thrown on the Comintern's designs by the following extract from the official record of decisions reached at a meeting of the Communist International on the 31st October 1930: "Decided to instruct the I. K. K. I. to take steps to combine the existing national revolutionary groups in Tibet into a National Party and to instruct the I. K. K. I. to nominate Comrade Dordzhiyev (Dorjiev) as President of the Central Committee of the proposed new party." The equivalent of £20,000 was assigned for these activities in Tibet.

Customary Propaganda. For reasons given elsewhere,* the frequent allusions in Communist publications, particularly since the death of the Dalai Lama at the

* *Vide* pages 66-7.

latter end of 1933, to entirely fancied "Imperialist attacks on China through Tibet" again seem to have a special significance. One such, which appeared in the *Information Bulletin* of the League Against Imperialism for December 1932, ran as follows: "The Chinese High Commissar for Tibet, Sang Tse Choum, who was recently expelled from Tibet, has issued a report on conditions there. He declares that the troops of the Dalai Lama are commanded by British officers and that the war material employed is entirely of British origin. The officers are mainly drawn from the Indian army. The plans are for the establishment of an enlarged independent Tibetan kingdom which will be under British protection. British trading interests are developing intense activity in Tibet. In the schools, English is being taught instead of Chinese." Such statements bear their own refutation to those who have even the haziest knowledge of conditions in Tibet.

Tibet's Future Alliances. Official Communist writings during the past twelve months have made it clear that Moscow has not lost her old interest in Tibet, and it would be unwise to assume that lack of information of Communist intrigue in that country is the same thing as an absence of plotting. There are, however, two other suitors for Tibet's hand—Japan and the Nationalist Government of China—and there is some comfort in the thought that the nearer Lhasa draws to either Tokyo or Nanking the further do Moscow's chances of success recede. Meanwhile, the Regent, who is to carry on the administration till the Dalai Lama is reincarnated, has shown no inclination to depart from Tibet's traditional policy of friendliness towards Britain.

CHAPTER 7.

THE FAR EASTERN BUREAU, SHANGHAI.

Direction from Shanghai. It is now necessary to go somewhat further afield, to the centre of all Communist activities in the Far East—the Far Eastern Bureau and the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Congress in Shanghai. This step is essential in order that events referred to in the next four chapters may be seen in their true perspective, and in order to give a clear idea of the devious means by which the Communist International exercises control over the movement to which it has given birth.

Joseph Ducroux, the Trader. In the last week of May 1931, the Singapore police arrested a Frenchman named Joseph Ducroux. Arriving in Singapore on the 27th April 1931 under the name of Serge Le Franc, he rented an office in a respectable business quarter and did a certain amount of legitimate business on behalf of a French firm of steel product manufacturers which he claimed to represent. That he had other interests was discovered shortly afterwards when he was found to be associating in a most secretive manner with known leaders of the Malayan "Central", an organisation which controls Communist activities in Burma, Siam, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies. Ducroux had previously come to notice, not only as one of M. N. Roy's agents in Marseilles in 1926, but also as being connected with another French business organisation, Messrs. Chapeaux Frères, in Shanghai from 1927 till 1929. His arrest, itself of great importance, led to the discovery in Shanghai, a week later, of Communist records of far wider application. These documents are unique, as affording practically complete information of the Comintern's and Profintern's underground activities, extending over a period of about a year, in China, Japan (including Formosa and Korea), Indonesia, Malaya and the Philippine Islands.

The Functions of the F.E.B. and the P.P.T.U.S. Throughout that area, the controlling bodies in Moscow were found to have been acting through two

clandestine sub-organisations in Shanghai, called the Far Eastern Bureau and the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat of the Red International of Labour Unions, or the Shanghai office of the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat, whose accounts and correspondence were among the papers seized. The P.P.T.U.S. was the directive agency in the Far East of the Profintern, which is the name given to the International of the Red Trades-Unions. The Profintern is directly under the Comintern and concerns itself solely with the organisation and preparation of labour and wage-earners for world revolution. The Comintern is the council of the Third International, which, in turn, is directed by a committee known as the I.K.K.I. This committee numbers among its members several members of the Politbureau, the organisation of nine or ten men who jointly form the head of the Government of Russia. The power of the P.P.T.U.S. was, therefore, enormous and it had at its disposal almost unlimited funds. These local bodies, acting in the closest co-operation, carried out in the countries specified above, the exact functions of the Comintern and Profintern respectively, by which, indeed, they were financed, instructed and controlled through the medium of other sub-agencies in Berlin. Both were staffed by paid European Communists, forming a group of about a dozen principals, together with a number of Orientals for translation and liaison work.

The Far Eastern Bureau, as the area counterpart of the Comintern, was the senior formation of the two, and its function, briefly stated, was the translation into action of Comintern policy and directions: its objectives were, in fact, to bring about, by the spread of Communist doctrine and by opportunist agitation, conditions favourable for the seizure of political power by the proletariat and the eventual establishment of Soviet régimes, on the model of the U.S.S.R., wherever these conditions had been induced or revolution successfully engineered. The Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat was responsible for assisting in the attainment of these objectives by a parallel co-ordinated advance in the economic sphere by means of industrial agitation, leading, through the political strike weapon, to economic dislocation.

These dual functions involved a great variety of detailed organisation, propaganda and intrigue. They included the payment of subsidies on behalf of Moscow to regional Communist and extreme trades-unionist organisations ; the instigation, organisation and guidance of many types of Communist and trades-unionist effort ; the selection, preparation and dispatch of local Communists to Moscow for training as propagandists and soldiers ; the penetration of the "opposing forces" through spies and propagandists ; the fomenting of disaffection and rebellion among the State forces in those countries ; the fine adjustment of local Communist policy to fluctuations in the local situation ; and constant consultation with Moscow by telegram, postal letter and messenger.

Conspiratorial Methods. These activities were concealed by systematic methods of conspiracy. The members of the Shanghai organisations were provided with forged or stolen passports and business or professional credentials which served to disguise their real objects and enabled them to move freely in the area under their control. In addition to personal tours, they held regular meetings with the various formations of their "command" at separate establishments, a number of which were maintained in Shanghai for the purpose, and also issued instructions through the medium of liaison agents, whose knowledge of the organisation and personnel was rigidly limited in order to minimize the consequences of arrest. Correspondence with Moscow, via Berlin, both by letter and telegram, was conducted in a cipher which afforded a high degree of security, telegraphic addresses registered in false names and post-office boxes or accommodation addresses being used at both ends for receipt and dispatch. An elaborate courier system, too, existed for better communication with Moscow and with the countries in which the Shanghai organisations acted on Moscow's behalf. A "secret service" section was maintained to keep meetings under observation and, through spies planted in the Chinese and Settlement police, to keep the principals forewarned of impending police action.

The Magnitude of the Efforts. The full scope of the activities, betrayed in such comprehensive and minute detail by the impounded documents, can be

outlined only very imperfectly in so brief a space as the present work, but some idea of their diversity and magnitude may be gathered from the fact that the expenditure of the two Shanghai organisations was approximately £150,000 per annum. Of this sum nearly £100,000 was being spent on Communist work in China, where the labours and expenditure of the Comintern had already been rewarded by the establishment of three " Soviet districts ", and the Far Eastern Bureau was, therefore, handling a situation in the ultimate practical stage of revolution and sovietization rather than in the more academical stage of preparation.

The Results Achieved. Elsewhere in the Far East (except in Japan, where Communism would seem to have been securely established in capable hands) the movement was in a comparatively backward state, lacking to a great extent the necessary personal direction and funds, but was, even so, shown by the papers seized to represent a more serious danger than the authorities of the countries concerned had suspected. At the time of the seizure, the Communist situation in French Indo-China and the Federated Malay States had been brought under serious review by the Far Eastern Bureau and the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat, which had sent a special emissary, the French Communist Joseph Ducroux, to study the situation on the spot.

A Future Programme. As a result of Ducroux's reports, an ambitious programme was being drawn up which involved the reorganisation of the existing Communist apparatus, the linking up of the movement in Indo-China with the Communist Party of France and of that in Malaya with those of Burma, India and Great Britain, the establishment of special Communist agents (including Tan Malaka, the notorious Indonesian Communist) at Rangoon and Singapore, and the expenditure of considerable sums of money in Burma and Malaya—\$45,000 (gold) in the former area and \$50,000 (gold) in the latter. The Secretariat's extreme interest in India during the four years of its existence in Shanghai was revealed by a series of articles which appeared in *Trud*, the *Pan-Pacific Worker*, and other similar organs of the

Communist International or its subsidiaries. Indian Communists seem to have reciprocated this interest ; for one of them wrote towards the end of 1931 in an official report on behalf of the Communist Party of India : " We understand that some sort of contact has been made from time to time between the Bengal group and various other colonial parties (Malaya and China, etc.). This contact may be very useful and should be kept up. It is a possible channel of communication with the Far Eastern Bureau. If the secretariat of the Party remains in Bombay, it will be difficult for them to keep this contact. We suggest that the Bengal provincial committee, or a sub-committee of it, should be given this task."

A Recovery. The revelations made by these documents undoubtedly strengthened the hand of local authorities by bringing up to date with unprecedented completeness their knowledge of Communist technique. The Comintern's plans over the whole area suffered a corresponding set-back, and their organisation must have been seriously dislocated by the discovery of their secrets. Of the whole group of Communist organisers, however, only four were actually apprehended, and there are already indications that this dangerous organisation, backed by Moscow's brains and money and assisted by those whose activities it used to control, is again getting into its stride. By September 1932 the Bureau had sufficiently recovered itself to organise with the utmost secrecy a " Greater Representative Conference " in Singapore which was attended by its own special envoy ; a year later it had resumed payment of some of its periodical subsidies and was negotiating for the dispatch of students from the Far East to Moscow ; there are more recent indications that a new propaganda offensive is being planned in Shanghai. An agent of the Bureau has, moreover, already begun a tour of inspection of the various Communist organisations in the South Seas with the two-fold object of improving their relations with one another and with the centre in Shanghai, and later of advising whether the time has again come to appoint resident agents in places outside Shanghai to assist in the co-ordination of local effort. In fact, it seems highly probable that a reconstituted but anonymous Far Eastern Bureau

is behind much that purports to emanate from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and that the latter body is being used merely as a stalking-horse behind which to re-establish the old lines of contact with colonial dependencies in the South Seas and possibly also with India. If the Bureau is allowed to regain its former position as the Comintern's plenipotentiary in the Far East, it will not repeat the mistakes it has made before. Rather will it reappear as a more formidable and more implacable enemy of imperialism and capitalism.

CHAPTER 8.

WESTERN CHINA AND BURMA.

Early Attentions from Moscow. Although the wave of Communism which swept China in 1925 and 1926 did not extend so far west as Yunnan, yet it was hardly to be expected that the unsettled conditions which followed in its train would not have repercussions on the borders of Burma. Early in 1926, a Jewish Communist agent named Borisov, better known for his earlier intrigues in Tibet, found his way to Yunnan from where he appeared to be conducting a campaign of Communist propaganda across the French border. Very little is known of his real activities in Chinese territory, but the presumption to be drawn from subsequent events and from the knowledge of what happened further east is that he was the advance-guard of the coming Communist invasion of Yunnan. Whatever the truth, by September 1926, Tengyueh, the capital of western Yunnan, fell into the hands of a certain Colonel Liu who declared his allegiance to Fan-Sheh-Sheng, a Cantonese general whose ambition it had been to conquer the province and bring it under Bolshevik control. Although the "rebel" occupation of the city which followed Colonel Liu's *coup d'état* was shortlived, it was the signal for the outbreak of a widespread campaign of what is loosely termed "banditry", which affected many parts of the province.

The presence in Yunnanfu, the provincial capital, during 1927, of a number of trained Communist agitators under the control of a one-time captain in the Chinese army resulted in a strengthening of anti-British propaganda. A boycott of British goods was declared, shopkeepers were exhorted to make no sales to British households, servants in the employ of British subjects were called upon to leave their posts, and the English hospital was required to be handed over and one of its doctors was to be dragged through the streets as a "running dog" to the foreigners. So acute did the position become that it was found necessary to evacuate all British and

American subjects from the interior of the province and all European women and children even from Yunnan itself.

Misrepresentation of British Intentions. That the hand of Moscow was to be seen in all this there is no shadow of doubt, for on the 20th December 1926, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International addressed the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang in Canton in the following terms :—" If there should be intervention, England will have to throw Indian troops against Canton. But, dear comrades, we are sure that you have sufficient determination to move the revolutionary troops of Canton against the north-east provinces of India before the British military clique stretch forth their hands to strangle the Chinese revolution. British Imperialism, aware of the danger, is taking steps to increase the military forces on the Indo-Chinese frontier, but, under the existing menace from the peoples of the Middle East and the proletariat of the Soviet Central Asiatic Republics, in order to repel the advance of revolutionary forces it will be compelled to call a considerable number of native proletarians liable for military service, a fact which can only further the development of the revolutionary movement in India itself. There is no doubt that the appearance of victorious Chinese revolutionary troops in India would evoke a wave of national-revolutionary movement among the Indian proletariat.

" We believe that, before British Imperialism has created a military threat to Yunnan and the south-west provinces of China, it is essential that the national-revolutionary Government of Canton, with a view to preventing attack, should commence the struggle first. A plan was drafted some time ago by the military delegation of Canton, with the assistance of the best military specialists of the U. S. S. R., for an advance by the Cantonese troops upon Burma. It appears to us that the time for putting this plan into effect has now arrived."

Some Results of Propaganda. There is good reason to believe that the Canton Government, acting upon this suggestion, decided to form a strong force to operate in Yunnan in order to repel a fancied British

attack from Burma. This force would be prepared to advance into Burma should occasion arise. Although, as a result, probably, of Communist pre-occupation elsewhere, no serious military operations eventuated, yet the history of this period is interesting in that it throws light on the many-sided methods by which the Communist International works its will.

Shortly after the letter quoted above was written, stories began to appear, first in the Calcutta paper, *Liberty* (then the property of the Bose brothers), then in Chinese papers, and later in the form of rumours and leaflets in Yunnan itself, of a concentration of British troops on the Burma-Chinese border with a view to an attack on Chinese territory. So sedulously was this entirely spurious report circulated that, in spite of official assurances of its falsity, it eventually formed the basis of the attack on British interests in southern China of which an account has already been given.

Yunnan, a Base for Attacks on India. Lack of adequate preparation caused the Communist Party of China to fail in its mission of "sovietizing" the province of Yunnan, but the question of making it a base for attacks on India was still present to the minds of Moscow's advisers. In 1929, for instance, when the earlier troubles had subsided, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was again asked "to institute more intensive activities in the Chinese province of Yunnan" and "to extend Comintern activity to the North-Eastern Frontier areas of India".

A Set-back to Communism. The advent of Lung Yun, a general of the Kuomintang school, in 1929 put an end to further plotting, and by 1932 he had succeeded in giving to the province much needed peace and a stable administration. This he accomplished, firstly by reducing the size of his army and the power of subordinate commanders, and secondly by a ruthless destruction of "bandits". Floods, a poor harvest and the consequent economic depression caused a temporary set-back in 1933, but the provincial Government weathered the storm and General Lung retained his position in spite of efforts to

drive him out or to make him divert his allegiance from Nanking to Canton. For the time being, therefore, Burma's eastern neighbour gives no cause for alarm, and it seems unlikely that the recent operations in the Wa States were attributable to Communist intrigue.

Burma. The similarity, from the Communist point of view, which exists between the Chinese province of Yunnan and the Indian province of Burma—separated as they are only by a long straggling land frontier—makes it necessary to include in this chapter a short account of Communist intentions in the latter province, whose problems are so different from those of India proper. This incursion into what is now a part of India is the more justifiable when the impending separation of Burma from India is kept in view, and when it is remembered that the entirely independent rebellion which broke out there in 1931 revealed the existence of all the elements necessary for a first-class revolution if Communist organisation is allowed to make any considerable headway.

Chinese Communists in Rangoon. In Rangoon is located a small, and hitherto entirely ineffectual group of Chinese, which is supposed to control Communist activities, under the general supervision of the Singapore "Central", both in Burma and Yunnan. Unavailing efforts have been made from time to time to improve this organisation and to establish contact with various Burmese revolutionary organisations in Rangoon or elsewhere. This group's activities have, however, been strictly circumscribed by the deportation of its members from time to time whenever they have shown signs of becoming dangerous, and their preaching of Communist doctrines has necessarily been confined to the circulation of suitable literature at times of communal or industrial crisis. They did succeed in forming a union of Chinese shipping coolies during the dock strike in May 1930, but this organisation did not survive the deportation of its two leaders—both dangerous criminals—some four months later. They also succeeded in forming a small branch in Upper Burma towards the end of 1931, at the head of which was Aw Ah Hu, the manager of a Chinese school where Communist doctrines were being instilled.

The "Burma Committee". Law Ah Hu was also a member of the "Burma Committee" which was discovered in April 1932 to be in direct correspondence with the Communist headquarters in Singapore. Of eleven members of this Committee, seven were traced and four deported at the end of 1932 and the upcountry branch collapsed. The Committee's leader and financier seems to have been a young hotel keeper in Rangoon named Hwee Chi Sang. By reason of his having been born in Rangoon, Hwee Chi has managed to escape deportation, although he has been closely connected, if not always with the movement itself, at least with those who gave birth to it and tended its growth. From its inception in 1928, this Chinese group has maintained a fitful connexion with Singapore by means of an irregular courier service and has received instructions and advice from that quarter. The formation of the Burma Committee seems to have resulted from these instructions which have always insisted upon the extension of the party's activities outside the limits of Rangoon City. Liaison with Yunnan has been less perceptible, but has possibly been kept up through the medium of Tuan Tsong Kwai, a young Yunnanese who has made the return journey from Rangoon to his native province on several occasions since he first joined the party, as one of the original recruits, at the end of 1928.

Tuan Tsong Kwai.* The part which this young Chinese has played as the Rangoon party's principal liaison officer during recent years is deserving of greater elaboration. He first came to Rangoon in 1926 to work as a clerk in a Chinese firm. Losing his employment three years later, he fell in with a Buddhist priest, named Ban Hui, as whose "disciple" he left, in September 1932, for Penang *en route* for Singapore in order to report on the affairs of the Burma Committee and to receive instructions. He was well reported upon by his fellow members of the Rangoon party, who described him as "a member of the young proletariats and quite reliable". He returned to Rangoon three months later and immediately left for Yunnan. His most recent

*Tuan Tsong Kwai was arrested on the 12th January 1935 and deported to Yunnan.

important mission on the party's behalf was to India proper where he carried out, unobserved, a two months' tour which embraced a number of industrial centres. Though little is known of his doings in India and nothing of the purpose of his frequent visits to Yunnan, a very definite knowledge of the objects of his earlier journey to the Straits Settlements raises a strong presumption against him, and it is almost certainly to him that a report received early in 1933 referred. This report, which came from a reliable quarter, mentioned the arrival in Yunnan of a secret mission comprising eight Communists, one from India and seven from French Indo-China. The nature of their business was not revealed but it was said that they carried a large-scale map of India with them.

Plans for the Future. Although, therefore, persistent action by the authorities has effectively impeded the growth of the Chinese Communist movement in Burma and has prevented it from establishing contact with indigenous subversive elements, there are many signs that hopes of spreading the Communist gospel from the east have not been abandoned. Proposals are still on foot to provide a trained Communist agent to take charge of the Rangoon branch*, and a scheme for the dispatch of Indian and Burmese students for training in Shanghai or Moscow is also under discussion. Preparations in this latter connexion are said to have reached an advanced stage, and it is possibly of some significance that Hwee Chi Sang paid a short visit to China in the summer of 1934. Of equal importance is the evidence of co-ordinated effort between the party in Rangoon and the headquarters in Singapore and the similar co-operation with India and Yunnan which Tuan Tsong Kwai's movements would seem to suggest.

A Second Line of Attack. Meanwhile, evidence has been accumulating of Moscow's concentration on another line of approach to her Burmese problem, the western line through London. Amongst this evidence is the strong support which Communist bodies in London have been affording to those who advocate that Burma

*Cf. also the proposal (referred to in Chapter 7) to dispatch Tan Malaka to Burma.

shall remain an integral unit of Federal India. For once, capitalists, such as those who control the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, and Communists, such as Shapurji Saklatvala, are speaking with one voice. As I have already said*, Moscow imagines that her doctrines will be allowed greater play under an Indian government than under the present Government of India, and she is naturally perturbed at the thought of her plans being upset by the existence of a wedge of territory which is to remain under the direct control of the British Government. These sentiments were well expressed in a statement which was circulated at the twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain held in London from the 12th to the 15th November 1932 : " The North-West Frontier will still be a special preserve, an armed camp for attack upon the U. S. S. R. Burma will be separated, as the Simon Commission suggested, as a wedge to drive between the Soviet territories of southern China and the revolutionary movements of India. The Viceroy will still retain despotic powers ; the armed forces will still be at the disposal of the Imperial Government. Burma will be bound tighter to the Empire than ever before." It is not necessary to look very deep below the surface in order to discern the hopes upon which Moscow had been building.

Saklatvala's Activities. Moscow's earlier plans were contained in a series of letters written by S. D. Saklatvala, one of her mouthpieces in London, during 1931 and 1932 to the leader of one of the organisations responsible for the Burma Rebellion. These letters contained the usual injunction to sever all connexion with the Indian National Congress, and urged instead, co-operation with eastern branches of the League Against Imperialism and the establishment of either open or secret contact with the " Chinese Soviet Republic "

The Burmese Students' Union. Another side of Saklatvala's activities consisted of the corruption of Burmese students in England, wherein he was assisted by a young Burman, named Oo Kyaw. The son of a respectable landowner in the Henzada district, Oo Kyaw arrived

* *Vide* page 4.

in London in 1927 to study for the Bar. It was not long before he became involved in politics and later became the secretary of the Burmese Students' Union. Founded in 1928 with the object of providing social amenities for Burmans studying in England, the Union quickly fell a prey to the evil influence of Saklatvala and his associates in the League Against Imperialism and the Communist Party of Great Britain. As its secretary, Oo Kyaw has engaged, from 1930 onwards, in a ceaseless campaign of anti-British propaganda, in which he has been ably assisted by his English Communist friends. The chief objects of his comment or attack have been the Burma Rebellion, the Separationist policy, and the proceedings of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform. All his writings on these and kindred subjects have betrayed him as being strongly imbued with Communist ideals and as extremely desirous that they should be put into practice, in the Bolshevik way, in his native Burma. His treatment of the Burma Rebellion is typical. After praising the rebels and strongly condemning constitutional politicians, he drew a comparison between the Burma and Irish Rebellions and proceeded to advocate the establishment in Burma of a Soviet form of government on Russian rather than Irish lines.

The Response in Burma. Owing largely to "war-weariness" after the Rebellion but partly to the daring novelty (to the simple Burman mind) of Oo Kyaw's gospel of confiscating other people's property—a doctrine which has a peculiar appeal to those who have little or nothing to lose—the response in Burma was not immediate. Recent events had proved that charms and tattoo marks did not render even monks invulnerable; all was not gold that glittered. It was natural, therefore, that those who had but recently suffered defeat should wish to subject any new proposals, however attractive, to more careful scrutiny than usual. Oo Kyaw's correspondents in Burma had been almost exclusively extremist monks or laymen, and it was from them that the first move came in the summer of 1933.

The Dobama Society and the All-Burma Youths' League. Chief amongst them was "*Thakin*" Ba Thaug, a man with a particularly ursavoury political

record and a newly joined member of the League Against Imperialism in London. Ba Thaung had founded, in 1930, a revolutionary organisation known as the *Dobama* Society whose ostensible object was to instil a spirit of nationalism into the Burmese people and to work for their moral, intellectual and physical improvement. After a somewhat precarious existence, the new society began to disintegrate until, by the end of 1931 it virtually ceased to exist. Eighteen months later, however, Ba Thaung, fired with new-found enthusiasm, succeeded in remodelling it on Communist lines. Parallel to this society was the All-Burma Youths' League, which also owed its origin to Ba Thaung. As the parent society, so too the League retired into obscurity at the end of 1931, to emerge when the Communist trumpet was blown in June 1933. Half-hearted members were expelled and new ones took their place; drastic changes were made in the personnel of the secretariat; the new secretary, Lay Maung, and the treasurer, Illa Pe, were nominees of Ba Thaung, specially chosen for the correctness of their "ideology"; new branches were formed in several up-country districts; and an intensive campaign of Communist propaganda was initiated, in furtherance of which prominent members began to tour the province. The paddles had thus started to revolve and all that was lacking was a chart by which to steam.

"Manifesto on the Burma Reforms". Oo Kyaw supplied this deficiency when he dispatched a long manifesto outlining a plan of action for Burmese Communists to follow. After a long diatribe, on conventional lines, on the iniquities of British rule, the writer of the manifesto revealed his real purpose—an appeal to his Burman colleagues to set up a series of organisations in order to preserve those engaged in agriculture or in industry from "likely dangers". "All these organisations", he continued, "will come under one central body, and work will be pushed forward, under its direction, towards freedom. Then will the menace of the foreigners, such as the Bullinger Pool which controls the rice trade, the Bombay-Burma Trading Company which has a monopoly over Burmese timber, the Burma Oil Company which rules the oil market, the Burma Corporation which

monopolises Burm. 's minerals, and the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company which controls the river traffic in Burma, and the Government which protects these people, be brought under control." A section of the press was to be won over to the cause and to be protected when it "gives expression to the wishes of the people". It hardly seems necessary to say that the "central body" in question was to become a branch of the League Against Imperialism in London. These principles had, of course, been vaguely expounded on many previous occasions by Oo Kyaw and others of his way of thinking, and Ba Thaung's interpretation of them led to the development of subversive organisation in three main directions: students were to be induced to form unions and agitate for control of the educational system; labour bureaux were to be set up, from under cover of which it would be possible to organise strikes amongst labourers and peasants; and volunteer corps and athletic clubs were to be formed in order to produce a disciplined and united body of workers.

Activity Amongst Students. The first part of this programme was in charge of Lay Maung, the newly appointed Secretary of the All-Burma Youths' League. Lay Maung began to coquet with the Youths' Improvement Society of Rangoon in an attempt to secure unity of effort between the League and the Society. The latter organisation had been formed some eight years previously with the laudable objects which its name implied, but its membership had been of small proportions until, shortly after this drive began, a number of new branches were opened all over Burma. This sudden expansion may have been mere coincidence, but it is obvious that, if Lay Maung's efforts even partially succeed, the Society will form a useful auxiliary to the League's own efforts. From April to June 1934 Lay Maung and the more prominent of his fellow members toured the province, making intemperate speeches, advocating the nationalization of land and its distribution amongst the peasants and working classes, eulogizing the Russian system of Government, and urging the formation of further branches of the League. At the close of the year, the League became deeply involved in the affairs of the University Students' Union in Rangoon

and urged the Union to declare a strike in order to compel the University authorities to redress certain grievances under which the students believed themselves to be suffering. Mass meetings were organised in the City and two of the League's officials were dispatched to enlist public sympathy in up-country districts. It is only to be hoped that the gain to the League in prestige and membership will not be commensurate with its output of effort.

Industrial Activities. Ba Thaung himself undertook the working out of the second part of his programme—the formation of workers' and peasants' unions. He visited the oil-fields at Yenaungyaung and the refineries at Syriam and succeeded in organising unions amongst the employees of the Burma Oil Company and also amongst the unemployed. At a later stage he attempted to gain control of a rival organisation which exists in Yenaungyaung, and was not altogether unsuccessful. It is no coincidence that two important recipients of Oo Kyaw's and Ba Thaung's confidences have obtained positions as chemists in the Burma Oil Company and the Indo-Burma Petroleum Company at Syriam and Seikkyi. U Su, the one, is still in regular correspondence with Oo Kyaw and his London friends in spite of his having publicly announced his retirement from politics; Hla Baw, the other, has been an active member of the *Dobama* Society since its inception and is still working in close association with Ba Thaung. Ba Thaung also decided to contest a by-election to the provincial Legislative Council, and, although he had not the remotest chance of success, he and his following made full use of the greater freedom of speech which an electioneering campaign usually affords. For nearly a month Communist and revolutionary doctrines were proclaimed, in more intemperate language and with more unbridled licence than ever before, to the peasantry in an area notorious for rebellions and upstart kings in the past. He and his select band of followers toured the countryside condemning the present Government, and advocating the formation of branches of the *Dobama* Society, the Youths' League and the National Volunteers as a first step towards the setting up of a new independent State on the very desirable Russian model whose praises they sang. The election over, Ba Thaung

and his companions were ordered to leave the district. Their refusal to do so resulted in their arrest and conviction, an event which evoked a storm of protest in Communist circles in London. Their conviction was later set aside on appeal—proof, it was claimed, of the power of internationalism and of the imperative need for co-ordinating the attack on imperialism. Emboldened by this result, Ba Thaung resumed his interrupted campaign, but means were fortunately found of preventing a repetition of his former outspoken advocacy of open rebellion, and this dangerous “*thakin*” retired underground where he still seems to be at the time of writing.

Volunteer Organisations. The organisation of volunteer corps (the third part of the programme) was left mainly in the hands of Tun Shwe, who had formerly been a member of the Rangoon University Officers’ Training Corps where he naturally gained some experience of military methods and discipline. Having obtained employment as a schoolmaster in the Toungoo district, Tun Shwe was fired with enthusiasm for Communist ideals by his brother who had been a member of the Burmese Students’ Union in London. It was through this brother that he met Ba Thaung, who induced him to accept office in the *Dobama* Society when it was reconstituted in June 1933. Tun Shwe’s selection for the post of commander of the proposed National Volunteer Corps was a natural one. He had already organised and was in control of a flourishing branch of the Green Army in the Toungoo district. This all-Burma body was founded some time ago with the worthy motive of providing the military authorities with suitable recruits. Encouraged in some cases by local officials it gained considerable popularity in several districts, and any effort spent in capturing it would obviously be well worth while. Fortunately the campaign of penetration has so far been attended with comparatively small gains to the Communist cause, but the rival “national” corps, which must necessarily recruit from much the same field, has made some headway. As a result of the extensive tour by Lay Maung and his lieutenants which has already been noticed, several new branches have been formed, including one in Yenaung-yaung, and there is no present indication that this is to

be the end. These branches have been described by those who advocate their formation as "red armies", and there is no reason to doubt that this is what their Communist organisers intend them to be. Even more disquieting is the gradual weaning of those who were behind the recent rebellion from the crude forms of propaganda and organisation which were then employed, to the more practical and subtle methods which the Russians exploited to their advantage prior to 1918. The starting of Youth Leagues and volunteer corps, the attempt to tamper with labour and the close contact maintained with Communist bodies in London, are all characteristic of the methods which are being adopted in other parts of the East under the Comintern's direction. There is, moreover, much in the character of the Burmans to make the masses amongst them particularly susceptible to Communist influences, and the economic depression, weighing particularly heavily on the agricultural classes (although relatively more so on the landlords than the labourers), is calculated to facilitate the spread of doctrines which seem to point an easy (if somewhat bloodstained) path to Utopia.

CHAPTER 9.

FRENCH INDO-CHINA AND SIAM.

Early Nationalist Tendencies. The serious rising in Indo-China with which the French had to deal in the latter half of 1930 was the result of agitation, nationalist and economic in itself, but skilfully fostered and engineered by Communist emissaries, extending over a number of years. The beginnings of what may well be its counterpart are now to be seen in various other eastern countries and the early history of the movement is, therefore, of more than usual interest. In 1912 there began in Annam a movement which had as its object the establishment of a republican form of government in imitation of that which had been set up in China at about that time. The movement never caused any serious anxiety, despite the impetus which it derived during the Great War from the German Legation at Bangkok, but its existence was revealed from time to time by terrorist outrages such as attacks on jails or frontier-posts, the poisoning of European troops and small risings which were easily suppressed. Its leaders were gradually arrested or made to flee the country and by 1920 the movement had been practically eradicated.

A Communist Complexion. Of the next few years the French authorities themselves have written : " It was some considerable time before the effects of the capture of power in Russia by the Bolsheviks and the advent of Communism made themselves felt in Indo-China, despite its proximity to Canton, one of the seats of the evil. But, when the new rulers of the U. S. S. R. had taken stock of the success of their efforts in European countries and had turned their attention to the colonies of the countries of imperialism and capitalism, the situation began to develop rapidly, and the Communist movement in Indo-China assumed greater importance and of recent years has demanded more and more attention. The extensive spreading of Communist ideas, the appeal to the baser instincts of a subject people already imbued with feelings of xenophobia, the teaching of seditious war-cries to simple country-folk, and the systematic *mala fide*

exploitation by highly coloured propaganda of numerous incidents which are inherent in the political or economic life of a nation, all presented a danger against which it was necessary to guard."

Nguyen Ai Quoc. This wave of Communism produced an Annamite leader who was, in course of time, to lead the most serious revolution which Indo-China has yet experienced. Nguyen Ai Quoc is his name, and his apprehension by the Hong Kong police in 1931, as a direct result of the arrest of Joseph Ducroux with whom he was then in correspondence, was a serious blow to Communism in the Far East. This individual was sent in his early days to Moscow for training in Communist theory and ideals, whereafter he was employed in Canton as a Communist link between Indo-China and Russia and also as an instructor to those of his compatriots whom force of circumstances had driven there. These latter he induced to join a League of Oppressed Peoples which he had founded and in which were included Indians, Koreans, Formosans, Philipinos, Javanese, and even Siamese. He, himself, was in charge of the Annamite (the word by general usage includes inhabitants of Tongking and Cochin-China also) section of this organisation. The League eventually resolved itself into a purely Annamite body with a membership which included almost all the Annamite emigrants in China, and its objective became the promotion of a national revolution and the inclusion of Indo-China in the United States of Soviet Russia.

Quoc's Work at Home. By a regular system of emigration and immigration, Quoc succeeded in establishing a number of secret branch organisations within Indo-China itself; and a continual flow of new recruits to Canton (and later to Hong Kong) and of finished propagandists to Indo-China was kept up for several years both by land and sea. During this period a number of existing subversive organisations were drawn into the net. In 1927 the anti-Communist reaction set in in Canton, and Nguyen Ai Quoc was forced to flee to Russia, but later found his way to Siam. This *contretemps* undoubtedly delayed the coming revolution, but a new headquarters was eventually opened in Hong

Kong and Nguyen Ai Quoc, now a fully accredited representative of the Communist International, was recalled from Siam and the work went on again to such effect that within six months, branches of the Annamite Communist Party were functioning in all the more important factories, railways, steamship companies and public utility services (not excluding the arsenal at Saigon) in the three provinces of Indo-China.

Work Abroad. Despite his other preoccupations however, he found time to attend, on behalf of the Far Eastern Bureau, the third representative conference of the South Seas Communist Party, held in Johore in the Malay States in April 1930, which made radical changes in Communist organisation in the Far East—changes which placed Indo-China under the direct control of the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai. In his address he laid stress upon the need for Chinese members to study the Malay language and to enlist Malay recruits. Nor did his interest in international politics stop there : for the investigation of the Noulens' case made it clear that he was concerned with the development of the Malay and Javanese Communist parties throughout 1930 and during the first half of 1931. He doubtless believed that his own particular project in Indo-China would be the more effective were it accompanied by similar risings in neighbouring colonial countries.

The 1930 Rebellion. The French authorities thus describe the situation as it was on the 1st May 1930, when matters came to a head : "When the time came, so thorough and extensive had been the preparations of the Communist Party of Annam that one was led to believe that it would continue its operations despite the repressive measures which had been vigorously employed against it for several years past, and particularly since the 1st May 1930 on which date there came the first serious disorders in the history of French Indo-China." Of the rebellion itself, suffice it to say that it was carried out under the banner of the hammer and sickle by local leaders and others who had returned for the purpose from Siam or from Moscow, the latter having been given training in Communist schools ; that it was a most serious challenge to French imperialism ; and that the measures

necessary to suppress it taxed to the utmost the resources of the French authorities on the spot.

Survival of the Party. Despite its suppression in 1931, the Communist Party of Indo-China is still, in the opinion of competent judges, one of the most active organisations in the Far East. Nguyen Ai Quoc did not remain for long in custody in Hong Kong. He went into hiding in the south of China from where he once more began to direct the activities of his old adherents in Annam. Though his reappearance caused some misgivings amongst Communists in Cochin-China, who were inclined to look for support and direction to France rather than to China, the clandestine reorganisation of the Communist Party of Indo-China proceeded actively under the direction of young Annamites trained in Moscow. Progress was particularly rapid in Cochin-China, the results being less apparent in Annam and Tongking. By the end of 1933 it was evident that the new directive agency was not going to repeat the errors of its predecessor in 1930, which drove the rank and file into precipitate action. The reconstituted party now embarked upon a programme of secret instruction of the masses, avoiding anything which might bring it into conflict with the law. Literary societies were formed for the circulation of political papers; propaganda was spread in schools, and students who showed promise of devoting themselves to the Communist creed were dispatched to China, where employment was found for them in centres favourable to a continuance of their studies. Such methods are, of course, considerably more difficult to counter than the old ones which involved an immediate programme of violence and disorder.

Open Letters from the Communist Party of China. Support is lent to the view that a reconstituted Far Eastern Bureau is operating, under cover of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China by an 'Open Letter' which appeared in the *International Press Correspondence* of the 10th August 1934. This letter recalls another of its kind, addressed to "Indian comrades", which appeared in the same periodical at the end of 1933. This earlier letter examined the causes of the weakness of the Communist movement in India and put forward certain essential tasks for the considera-

tion of the Indian Party. It was received with great reverence by Indian Communists who have referred to its contents on more than one recent occasion in terms which leave no doubt of the fact that they regard it as something considerably more authoritative than brotherly advice from a sympathetic Communist body in another part of the world—more as a “basic document”. Similarly, the letter to those in Indo-China pointed out certain organisational defects and showed how they might be remedied. “Indo-China”, it said, “must be covered with a close network of agricultural workers’ unions, peasant leagues, peasant committees. With the Communist Party at the head, the workers must lead the peasants to the struggle against exorbitant taxes, against monopolies for rice, for land, against foreclosures for debt, for the complete cancellation of rent during the crisis, for the immediate cancellation of enslaving loans and indebtedness. . . . The programme of action adopted by your Party in 1932 has completely justified itself. This programme of action is a basic document for your struggle—for the struggle for the basic demands of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution. . . . Hand in hand with the Communists of France, hand in hand with the Communists of China, Japan, India and Indonesia, the Bolsheviks of Indo-China will be able to arouse the oppressed classes to the victorious attack on imperialism. The boundary between Kuomintang China and French Indo-China will cease to divide our peoples. Soviet Indo-China and Soviet China will unite in the World Federation of Soviet Republics.” Annamite translations of this letter appeared shortly afterwards in French Indo-China.

Relations with France. There have also been several recent indications of a closer connexion between Communists in the south of the colony and the Communist Party of France, and in February 1934 a deputation from the Paris section of the International Red Aid paid a visit to Saigon in order to enquire into living conditions in the colony and to address Annamite audiences on the lessons of the 1930 rising. Elaborate police precautions were taken in connexion with the visit of these three persons (whom the local press derisively described as “the three Moscowteers”) and they stayed, in consequence, for less than a month. In spite of this, however, their visit helped

to stimulate the general revival and to strengthen the relations between Communists in the two countries. Evidence of this is provided by a letter from the Communist Party of Indo-China which appeared in the Paris Communist newspaper, *L'Humanité*, the following August. "In the name of the proletariat and of the masses of the workers in Indo-China", it began, "we address a warm Bolshevik greeting to the proletariat in France and to the Communist Party, its valiant organiser and director in the revolutionary struggle." This letter concluded with an assurance that the Communist Party of Indo-China was also endeavouring to mobilize the workers and peasants of Indo-China in support of the international revolutionary movement against not only French imperialism but also against "the mandarins, nobles and landed native proprietors". It appealed for the continued sympathy, help and support of the French Party in its task.

Wider Implications. The Annamite rising of 1930 carries a message to other imperialist countries which is contained in the words: "There is no possible doubt that the Communist movement in Indo-China is a part of an international movement and that it is bound up with similar movements in neighbouring countries. The testimony of numerous Annamite Communists arrested during the rebellion and the documents seized establish this fact very conclusively." The report from which this translated extract is taken then proceeded to give three pages of examples of such testimony taken at random from official files on the subject, and concluded with the words: "*Et nous concluons en disant qu'il n'y a pas une menace particulière annamite, chinoise, javanaise, ou malaise, mais un danger commun pour tous les pays colonisateurs ; car l'action de nos adversaires est concertée à Moscou. Les intentions de l'Internationale Communiste ne sont d'ailleurs pas un secret. Les 'cahiers du bolchevisme', les résolutions des Congrès, la Correspondance Internationale, les discours parlementaires nous en fournissent la matière et nous assistons dans le Pacifique—en Indochine et ailleurs—à la lente réalisation de ses plans.*"

Siam's Early Freedom from Taint. Comparatively little was heard of Communism in Siam up to the end of 1932 and it was always assumed that this isolated kingdom was comparatively free from the evil. What little information came to the ear of authority seemed to point to the fact that the nominal Communist party which existed in Bangkok was in a feeble state, maintaining itself very precariously by the membership of a few low-class Chinese under the desultory and ineffective direction of the Malayan Communist Party in Singapore. Its connexion with any purely Siamese organisation was never apparent, but, even so, it seems to have caused some anxiety to the Siamese authorities who, having learnt from previous experience that deportation did not serve their ultimate purpose, decided, in 1930, to take more energetic measures against Communists within the kingdom. In the course of the year no less than thirty-one were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment each.

Luang Pradit's "Communism". Although the revolution which occurred in 1932 was certainly not of Communist making, it was productive of evidence that Communism of a kind existed in a latent form within the kingdom. The events which followed the setting up of a limited monarchy brought to the surface a local leader of the minority section in the Peoples' Assembly, whose name was Luang Pradit and who commanded a following of some twenty-five members out of a total of seventy. One of his first public actions was to produce a programme for his party which aimed at the establishment of an economic policy based on the rationalization of land, industry and labour. The strength of his following in the Assembly and the radical nature of his proposals caused such uneasiness in the country that the King was advised to prorogue the Assembly and to form a new State Council, eliminating the existing elements. This was done, a drastic anti-Communist law was passed and Luang Pradit was persuaded to leave the country for Europe. Although there is no evidence that the Third International was in any way connected with Luang Pradit's party, it was hardly to be expected that persons such as Nguyen Ai Quoc who took sanctuary in Bangkok from time to time would fail to leave some trace of their influence behind

them. And the most natural place to look for such traces was amongst the young educated Siamese who live in Bangkok itself. It was of such that Luang Pradit's party was mainly composed, and to such that a "reformed" Luang Pradit now feels himself bound to fulfil the promise of his ardent youth. When the first flush of excitement had subsided, Luang Pradit was allowed to return to Siam. His programme and political views were subjected to scrutiny by a committee specially appointed for the purpose, and, when his examiners had acquitted him of Communist tendencies, he was given the office of State Councillor for the Interior.

Attentions from Moscow. It is not the habit of the Communist International to miss an opportunity such as the revolution in Siam seemed likely to present, and it occasions little surprise to learn that, within a few weeks of the first manifestations of revolt, a leading agent of the Third International for south-east Asia arrived in Siam or that so important a personage as Tan Malaka*, who was arrested in Hong Kong on the 10th October 1932, was also on his way to Siam "with money and instructions" from Shanghai. Nor is it difficult to believe reports that Communists from French Indo-China had become increasingly active in trying to stir up trouble in Siam. Such things are but the ordinary routine of what a soldier has described as "soft spot tactics"—the basis of present Communist policy. The results of these attentions have fortunately been small so far. The Chinese party in Bangkok, ineffective as ever, has succeeded in establishing only the flimsiest contact with indigenous elements; Communist literature in the Siamese language has only just begun to make its appearance in small quantities in a few places; the authorities are as vigilant as ever and as prompt to inflict heavy penalties on those who transgress the new anti-Communist law; and no real effort seems yet to have been made to extend the movement outside Bangkok.

Siam's Future. It would probably be wrong, therefore, to attach very great immediate importance to the attempts which are still being made to foster the spirit of revolution and to divert it into Communist channels, but the history of recent events in French Indo-China

* *I* vide pages 62 and 106-7.

forbids one to disregard the small beginnings from which great movements spring. Though Luang Pradit's economic theories may not be Communism, they are none the less an advanced form of socialism, and when members of his party tour the country emphasizing the principles of freedom and equality, promising to relieve the sufferings of the working classes, and reiterating on every possible occasion that, under the present régime, the power of the people is supreme, they cannot complain if their meaning is misinterpreted by ignorant audiences. Such speeches can serve only to make fertile the ground whereon the Communists design to plant their seed, and, when to them is added a growing disrespect for established authority, conditions begin to approach the ideal from a Communist point of view. It can only be a matter of time before the man in the paddy fields hears, however vaguely, political murmurings; how he will react to these, if he reacts at all, remains to be seen. But everything points to the fact that Siam has yet a long and perilous journey to perform before its troubles are past, and the teaching of history is that Moscow will not permit it to make that journey alone. Indeed, information has just been received at the time of writing of a new Local Government Act which Luang Pradit, as Minister of the Interior, has succeeded in rushing through the Assembly. This Act provides for the ultimate establishment of no less than 5,000 deliberative assemblies, each with a nominated adviser attached to it, for the purpose of carrying on the work of the local administration. If this scheme is allowed to proceed to maturity, there will come into being in Siam at no distant date a form of government not dissimilar from that which Russia has herself adopted.

CHAPTER 10.

THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS AND THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES.

The Advent of Communism. The history of Communism in Malaya begins in 1924, in which year a number of existing Hailam* clubs, already dominated by Communists, were amalgamated into the "Nanyang General Labour Union" centred at Singapore. This organisation maintained close touch with similar organisations in neighbouring countries, but it was not till 1925 that the South Seas Communist Party, which was later to play so large a part in Malayan politics, came into being and set up its "Central" office in Singapore. Early the following year, this new party held its first conference at Singapore, seven delegates being sent from Canton to lead and instruct it. One result of this conference was the formation of a number of night schools, clubs, etc., which subsequent events proved to be hot-beds of disorder. A second conference took place a year later and was followed by a spate of Communist propaganda and by efforts to create disorder and to stir up hatred of the police. This led to serious trouble in Singapore at the end of 1927, which was only suppressed by drastic action by the local authorities. The Anti-Imperialist League made its appearance in Malaya in August 1928 and within a year twelve branches had been formed in the peninsula, the membership having reached the neighbourhood of 4,000 by the end of 1929—this despite continued official action against Communism generally since 1927.

Subdivision of Duties. The third conference of the South Seas Communist Party, which was held in April 1930, resulted in the drastic reorganisation of the Communist movement in the Far East. The South Seas Communist Party was dissolved and French Indo-China, hitherto under the control of "Central" in Singapore,

*Inhabitants of Hainan, a large Chinese island off the coast of Annam.

was brought direct'y under the wing of the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai; while a separate Malayan Communist Party was formed to further the movement in Malaya alone. The Parties in Burma, Siam, and the Dutch East Indies were to be attached to the Malayan Communist Party and to remain under the control of the Central Committee ("Central") in Singapore until such time as they might be sufficiently organised to stand by themselves. When that day came, they too, like Indo-China and Malaya would have direct relations with the Far Eastern Bureau.

Joseph Ducroux, the Communist. So well did this new arrangement work and so rapidly did the Malayan Communist Party develop, that within a year Moscow considered that the position merited special European supervision on the spot. Thus there came to Singapore, on the 27th April 1931, Joseph Ducroux, *alias* Serge Le Franc, the agent of the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat whose history has already been given in an earlier chapter. Events have proved that his orders were those of the Communist International, namely, to co-ordinate and reorganise, more especially on racial lines, the activities of Communists in Malaya, Indonesia, Siam, Calcutta and Rangoon, and his arrest by the Singapore police within a few weeks of arrival came as a fitting climax to their persistent and energetic campaign against Communism during the previous five or six years. Ducroux was sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment in Singapore, but after serving his sentence he found his way to Saigon, where he was again arrested. He was convicted by a French court of uttering and using a false passport and was subsequently deported to France. The far-reaching effects of this capture have already been described in Chapter 7, and it will suffice to say here that the blow which it dealt at Communism in the South Seas fell as heavily in Malaya as it did elsewhere.

Re-establishment of Contact. It has been shown, however, that there followed an early recovery in the headquarters in Shanghai. So, too, in Singapore, in particular, and in Malaya generally. Shortly after Ducroux' arrest, for instance, "Central" in Singapore addressed

a letter to the Far Eastern Bureau asking for advice and assistance in the work of reconstruction. Numerous police raids and the seizure of records and printing presses, not only in Singapore but also in Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and other States, failed to deflect the organisers from their course or to lessen the output of notifications and instructions, many of which called for the reorganisation of the Party in one way or another. The damage done by Ducroux' arrest to the very effective system of liaison between Singapore and Shanghai took more time to repair, however, and Malaya appears to have been left more or less to her own devices till the beginning of 1934. But as the centre of the Comintern's intrigue in the Far East began to recuperate, it made renewed attempts to gather up the broken threads of control which run through Singapore. In 1933, the Malayan Communist Party re-established some sort of contact with Shanghai and sent a special envoy to act as liaison officer there. He was met at first with vague promises of assistance in money, materials and men and after several months these began to materialize. Towards the end of that year the monthly subsidy again began to arrive at somewhat irregular intervals by safe opportunity from the new apparatus in Shanghai. Orders were issued at about the same time, through the medium of the Communist Party of China, to select one Indian and two Malay "comrades" for training abroad under the direction of the Third International, the intention being that they should remain in direct touch with Moscow on completion of their training.

Directions from Shanghai. Instructional letters were also received from time to time from the Far Eastern Bureau (or, to be more precise, the nameless body which had taken its place), a typical example being that which arrived in Singapore in June 1933. This document emphasized the importance of working amongst Malay and Indian labourers through the medium of the Red Labour Union and urged that special attention should be paid to women workers in factories and rubber estates. Organisations to oppose imperialism must, it said, be started under such names as the Anti-Imperialist League

and the League of the Independence of the Malay Race. The development of the Communist youth movement was also said to be an important duty, and another particularly urgent task was the formation of "cells" amongst soldiers, sailors and police. The secrecy of this work must be maintained at all costs, and the various persons employed in it must have no connexion whatsoever with each other. One passage which occurred in this instructional letter is of particular interest to India. It runs as follows: "The establishment of a Soviet Republic in Malaya will have very close connexion with the revolutionary movement in China and India, but that is not to say that the consummation of the revolution in China and India must always be the antecedent of the Malayan revolution, and you should not think that before the consummation of the revolution in China and India, the Party's activities in Malaya should be confined to exciting labourers and peasants to minor struggles. During this period we should make use of the chance to spread the influence of the Party, and whether we can do it successfully or not depends solely upon our decision as regards our future working schemes towards the path of revolution."

Internal Reconstruction. Meanwhile the development of the Party in Malaya itself proceeded on established lines and, as tin and rubber again began to come into their own, this reorganisation seemed to quicken its pace, aided both by funds and expert advice from the fountain head in Moscow. The "Central" organisation frequently moved its office from place to place, its discovery being a constant source of difficulty to the authorities. Extreme care has always been taken to shield the identity of the two or three persons who are the brains of the whole movement; devious and secret methods are adopted to conceal their connexion with local committees, printing sections, postmen, couriers and accommodation addresses. Similar methods are adopted to screen the correspondence which the "Central" keeps up with Burma, Siam and certain districts in the Dutch East Indies, and also the occasional attempts which it has made to secure contacts in Calcutta. The select two or three who are associated with the intimate administration of the movement are certainly ardent in their duties. The tone

of their instructions to their subordinates in every State has been definite, comprehensive and full of encouragement, and their line of future action has been clearly indicated from time to time by notifications as to the procedure to be adopted on special occasions, such as May Day or Lenin Day. A militant policy is to be adopted, Communists are to be allowed to join hands with ordinary criminals and suggestions have also been made that Communists should enter the Chinese criminal secret societies which abound in Malaya, in order to wean away their members and bring them into the red trades-unions; students are to be incited to mass insubordination; "no-tax" campaigns are to be organised; and everything possible is to be done to cause embarrassment to the Government. In August 1933 a representative conference was held in Singapore to consider reports from all the organisations under "Central's" control. Later in the year, these reports and the conclusions reached or them were discovered by the Singapore police in the course of a house-search. They drew a somewhat gloomy picture of the state of organisation in outlying areas but the conference ended on a note of optimism. Six resolutions were passed, the essence of which was that liaison must be effected with the Communist Party of India on the one hand and with the Communist Party of China on the other; the racial movement must be more strongly developed and classes must be started for the training of agents for this type of work and also for work amongst the peasants. A raid on the Party's printing section six months later was productive of evidence of a very much altered state of affairs. The headquarters in Singapore was shown to be in a flourishing and efficient condition and to be backed by adequate financial resources. Its printing section was well stocked with all requirements, including a typewriter and cyclostyle machines and a large quantity of propaganda (completed and in the course of preparation) in Chinese, English, Malay and Tamil.

An Emissary. The documents seized on this occasion also revealed the presence in Singapore of an anonymous Chinese agent of the International of Seamen and Harbourworkers (an auxiliary of the Comintern with its present headquarters in Rotterdam). He

appeared to be an international Communist of evidently high attainments and was clearly responsible for much of the progress that the movement made in Malaya during 1934. Inquiries made about him revealed the facts that he visited Siam, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies in the course of 1934 and that he was almost certainly in touch with, and possibly a representative of, the new apparatus in Shanghai. He was shown by the papers seized to have attended a special meeting of the seamen and harbour-workers' section of the Malayan General Labour Union, "for the purpose of examining the work of the past and of deciding upon the tasks of the immediate future". These tasks were to include the formation of ship and harbour committees, the extension of the section's activities to ports other than Singapore, and the organisation of "arms and munition investigation parties" in order to enable local marine workers to strike against the transportation of arms. This much is in evidence against him, but it is probably no coincidence that drastic reorganisation took place in other directions shortly after his arrival. For example, new rules for admission to the Malayan Communist Youth Corps were drawn up in April, which sought to improve the standard of the membership and to "prevent the enemy from sending treacherous persons or bad elements to mix among our corps". An examination of the material seized in the various raids made on depositories for Communist records during 1934 shows that there has also been a considerable advance in recent months in the field of propaganda in the Malay and Tamil languages, which had previously suffered from the defect that, being Chinese-inspired, it was far above the heads of those for whom it was intended and ended in being a meaningless jargon full of foreign terms, which excited the ridicule rather than the sympathy of those for whom it was intended.

Some Results of Propaganda. The first fruits of this prolonged and continuous campaign of reorganisation and development were gathered in Johore, where thirty-five Hailam coolies burned down fifty acres of young rubber trees because their demand for higher wages was not conceded. A search of the coolie lines, the occupants having absconded, disclosed a quantity of virulent Com-

munist literature and there were other traces of the fact that the Communists had been at work for some time amongst the labourers in that area. In Singapore, also, a successful attack was made in 1932 on the Roman Catholic Cathedral where a considerable amount of damage was done to the statuary. Another instance of violence occurred on the 12th December 1932, in a small village in Johore. Some three hundred Chinese assembled outside a coffee-shop; a bannerman then appeared; Communist pamphlets were distributed; crackers were fired as a signal; and the whole assembly then attacked two police constables, who were on duty in the village, and severely assaulted them with cudgels and iron bars. One managed to reach the police station nearby, and the other the house of the Inspector in charge of the district. The mob then advanced on the Inspector's house and he was forced to fire his revolver, killing two of the leaders. The chief significance of this incident lies in the facts that identical tactics had been adopted in Singapore on the previous day and that it was only the prompt appearance of the riot squad of uniformed police which prevented similar results. A disturbing feature of the Singapore incident was the fact that the crowd contained a large body of students, many of them of respectable and wealthy parents.

The Racial Movement. As has already been suggested, present efforts are chiefly directed towards the development of the racial movement, *i.e.*, the recruitment of Indians and Malays to the various extant Communist organisations. At the end of 1925, Tan Malaka, the notorious Sumatran whose history is recorded in the next chapter, gave it as his opinion that, "on account of differences in race and language and the Malay's laziness and love of pleasure, the only hope of revolution in Malaya lies with the Chinese." But there is reason to suppose that in 1930 or thereabouts Moscow came to the tardy realization that the Chinese had been, on the whole, unsuccessful in promoting subversive racial movement in other countries. It became obvious, therefore, that, if Communism was ever to take permanent root in Malaya and not remain merely a shallow growth amongst some sections of the immigrant population, vernacular propaganda must be made avail-

able which would attract the happy-go-lucky mentality of the average Malay peasant and offer at the same time a solace to the disappointed product of Malayan schools by feeding him with "dangerous thoughts" and focussing his attention upon what Moscow is pleased to call "his intolerable oppression and exploitation by Western Imperialism". Imported labour from the south of India must similarly be given special treatment. However unpromising the task, painstaking and determined efforts were made, first by Tan Malaka and Alimin, later by Nguyen Ai Quoc, and more recently still by a host of less illustrious evangelists, to put this policy into practice. But in spite of all of them the Malayan Communist Party has remained essentially an organisation for the Chinese. Only in the Malayan General Labour Union is there a considerable number of the other two races. The failure of these persistent efforts is due to a variety of reasons some of which are discussed in the following extract from a recent official report from Singapore: "Fortunately, throughout this grave period of depression (from the beginning of 1931 onwards) the 'Malay' Communist Party has not been formed; any sympathizers have generally been without any directing influence other than that of the Chinese heads of local divisional committees, themselves subjected to continual attrition as a result of police action. Lack of funds, the difficulties of language, contempt for the Chinese, and, perhaps, the general apathy of local Malays for any movement led by foreigners the prosecution of the ideals of which involves a monthly subscription and some self-sacrifice without a *quid pro quo* in the form of easy terms of borrowing money, account for the fact that no dangerous progress has been made."

Possible Dangers. But, although Communism in Malaya still remains an almost entirely exotic growth, sponsored by aliens and subsidized by foreign money, flourishing chiefly amongst Hailam Chinese, yet much of the Tamil and Malay propaganda now being circulated is simpler and more understandable than any of its kind previously issued by the Malayan Communist Party. That a campaign of this sort would, by very reason of its continuity and its volume, be productive of some results,

was a foregone conclusion. It was hardly to be expected, either, that the post-war growth of strong indigenous nationalist and subversive factions in the Dutch East Indies would leave British Malaya unaffected. Nor again could it be hoped that the Moscow-inspired rising, which resulted therefrom in 1926 and of which mention is made in the next chapter, would not have its repercussions in the Straits. Many of the leaders of this revolt sought asylum in Malaya, and investigations made at the time proved beyond doubt that British territory was being used as a base for further operations against the Dutch, although there was no direct evidence that British-born Malays or Javanese were concerned in the plots. Even a race as stoical as the Malays could hardly be impervious to a combination of such powerful influences as these, and there followed an awakening of political consciousness which had till then lain dormant. Its manifestations, fostered by a section of the Malay press, have become more apparent as year has succeeded year, and have brought with them the latent danger of a nationalist movement of some kind, possibly in sympathy with kindred revolutionary elements in the Dutch East Indies.

A few Malay "cells" are already in existence, and although they are described as "very backward and careless and lacking in knowledge of secret work", determined attempts are still being made to render them more efficient and to increase their strength and number. The Party's influence amongst the Indian section of the population is possibly a little stronger and the foundations of Indian groups have already been laid in Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and Singapore. If any such nationalist movement comes, therefore, it is certain to receive the sympathetic attention not only of the local Communist Party, backed by Moscow, but also of those political agitators from the Dutch East Indies, who, having fled their country after the Communist rising in 1926, are still available for carrying out the declared policy of the Third International. One of the series of reports to which I am indebted for much of this chapter concludes with the words: "The soil in Malaya may continue to be as unproductive of results from a racial point of view as it has been in the past; but the development of political

consciousness amongst the Malays renders the possibility of success less remote. Java will always supply an inexhaustible stream of agitators to foster anything approaching a definite move towards Malay nationalism in this country. And in the light of past events, it is certain that the Third International will again supply funds to maintain any sound anti-imperialist movement. Whether such a movement stands most chance of success in Malaya through labour or through racial channels, is a matter of opinion."

CHAPTER 11.

THE DUTCH EAST INDIES.

Similarity of Conditions. Like British India, the Dutch East Indies contain a teeming population, many elements of which are highly excitable and fanatical and furnish an admirably receptive soil for the seeds of subversive propaganda. Both countries are within easy reach of emissaries from China, and both dispatch yearly to the Hejaz large numbers of pilgrims who are liable to be tampered with by the agents of Moscow, who have for many years past taken full advantage of the unique opportunities which this annual concourse of visitors from Eastern countries presents. The benefits to be derived from a comparative study of the results produced there by the same forces as we see in operation in India are, therefore, the greater on these accounts.

Sir David Petrie's Views on the 1926 Disorders. Although there were Communists to be found in the archipelago several years earlier, it was not till 1926 that Communism began seriously to spread to the lesser centres in Java and Sumatra. The closing months of that year, however, witnessed serious disorders. Sir David Petrie's book, *Communism in India, 1924-7*, thus described the course which events took and the lessons which they taught : " On the night of the 12th and 13th November 1926 serious riots broke out, more particularly in West Java (Batavia, Bantam, East and Central Preanger), accompanied by serious attempts to subvert authority in other districts, or the preparation for such attempts. The genesis of these disturbances, which were widespread and were suppressed only after considerable loss of life and property, is tolerably clear and is highly instructive. Since July 1925 the Indonesian Communist Party (Netherlands-Indian Communist Party)* had been work-

* Referred to elsewhere as the P(artij) K(ommunistische) I(ndonesia).

ing on the lines of the resolutions passed at the fifth World Congress at Moscow (middle of 1924) and at a Communist conference at Djoeja (December 1924). These resolutions, as interpreted by the local leaders, laid down that the party's objects were 'to struggle by all means possible, also by force of arms, for the overthrow of the international *bourgeoisie* and the foundation of an international Soviet republic as a preliminary to the total destruction of the State'. As in India, emphasis was laid on the necessity of creating an 'illegal' organisation alongside of the 'legal' one. Organising on these lines, and by the use of the group (cell) system, the 'Board of Leaders' of the Indonesian Communist Party brought into being 'illegal fighting organisations, which at a given moment, would have to assist in an armed attempt to seize governmental power'. It appears that the propaganda conducted by the Board of Leaders in the second half of 1925 was principally aimed at labour, this step being in accordance with resolutions passed at the first Congress of transport workers in countries adjoining the Pacific, which was held at Canton in June 1924 and which was attended by two important leaders from Java. The Communists throughout the country not only conducted 'strong' propaganda among the existing labour unions, but endeavoured to establish new ones, the first fruits of this campaign being a series of strikes among these organised workers. The Government, however, were able to suppress these strikes, which were accompanied by deeds of terrorism and intimidation, so that the idea to turn the local strikes into a general strike did not materialize. The Board of Leaders of the I. C. P. at Batavia had been able to open at Soerabaya a branch of the Secretariat of the 'Red Eastern Labour' at Canton, which was affiliated with the Red International of Labour Unions, Moscow. There was also a proposal to establish at Singapore a bureau which would form a connecting link with the Netherlands-Indian Communists, and take charge of propaganda in Indo-China and elsewhere. The existence of such a branch has been confirmed, as well as the connexions of the Javanese leaders therewith, but its activities seem to have been far more important as affecting the Dutch East Indies than Singapore itself.

“Method of Organising. A marked feature of the party's policy was to draw the criminal fraternity within their organisation, the idea being to strengthen the party of illegal action, and to devise means for the use of violence against the Government. Another feature, for which India furnishes an almost exact parallel, was the attempt to secure the co-operation of the national revolutionary organisations and to get them to work under the ‘intellectual leadership’ of the Communists. Determined efforts were also directed to the formation of cells among the army and the police, although in this direction the amount of success achieved was very limited. On the other hand, the number of recruits secured from general sources appears to have been very great—vastly in excess of even the greatest membership that Communist organisations have ever claimed for themselves in India. In Bantam, membership tickets were sold to the number of 12,000, while in Palembang a ticket found bore the number 21,114. In these figures the Dutch authorities found clear proof that a small nucleus of well-disciplined Communists, by means of effective organisation and false slogans and promises, could create an amount of discontent that led up to spontaneous explosions and mass resistance to the authority of Government.

“The Timing of the Outbreak. The actual facts of the outbreak, which can be read elsewhere, are of far less importance for the purposes of this book than the methods by which the outbreak itself was brought about. It seems clear that the ‘high command’ busied itself more with the illegal side of the organisation, with the result that the outbreak may have taken place in advance of the general state of preparedness for concerted action. To this result the inclusion of the criminal riff-raff and the direct encouragement of the terroristic idea must have contributed in no small degree. That the lower elements must have greatly predominated would appear to be a necessary consequence of the fact that, between the organisers and the rank and file, there was no ‘nationalist bourgeoisie’, or politically-minded middle-class, such as is to be found in the chief direction and control of revolutionary movements in India. Thus, although the Communist teaching seemingly found and filled a political vacuum among the Javanese population,

the progress made was notable for the numbers rather than the quality of the recruits. In spite of this, it was said that the 'high command' had been so successful in bolshevising the party, in tightening up discipline and in intensifying agitation, that it was only at the eleventh hour that the magistracy and police gained some insight into what was going to happen."

The Survival of Communism. . An attempt will be made to show at a later stage in this book that the conditions which prevailed in India some twelve or fifteen months later were not dissimilar; the rebellion's reactions in Malaya have already been remarked upon in the foregoing chapter. Undeterred by this early failure, the agents of the Comintern continued to work and to organise, assisted to a large extent by five or six Indonesians who had recently completed a course of training in the Communist academy in Moscow. The year 1928 saw a flood of the most inflammable Communist literature, followed, in 1929, by the formation of branches of the Anti-Imperialist Union in four important places, and it was at this stage that the Dutch police again took matters in hand and made a large number of searches and arrests and, finally, deportations. Subsequent investigation showed that "cells" had been established in a number of centres, which had grown into larger organisations and had, where possible, extended their influence in hitherto innocuous existing societies, one of the more important of these having actually been induced to affiliate itself to the League Against Imperialism in Berlin. Since then, Chinese Communism* has receded into the background, the only recent indication of its existence being the discovery in June 1933 of an organisation led chiefly by schoolmasters and recruited mainly from Hailam Chinese. Twenty arrests were made in different parts of the colony, including Soerabaya and Malang, and a quantity of documents was seized which proved once again (if further proof were needed) that "Central" in Singapore was responsible for such activity as had been manifest in Dutch territory.

Moscow's Nationalist Policy in Operation. However ineffective the efforts of Chinese Communists may have been, convincing evidence was forthcoming in

*i.e. the movement directed by the Singapore "Central".

1930 of Communist attempts to penetrate the extreme nationalist associations, the *Partai Indonesia*, with Soekarno at its head, and the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (now the *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia*), whose leader, Mohamed Hatta, was studying in a college in Rotterdam. These attempts were in some measure a success, though it is probable that the nationalist leaders were merely flirting with the Communists in order to give additional trouble to the Dutch. As a competent critic remarked at the time, however, "the inordinate self-satisfaction of the local nationalists, who may think themselves able to use Communist allies for their own ends, may at any time easily furnish the more subtle Communist agents with useful material for reviving subversive activity". His view was confirmed by what happened in Indo-China shortly afterwards. About two hundred deportations took place in the middle of 1931, but the movement still flourished. Separate "nationalist" unions were formed for *chauffeurs*, domestic servants, printers, shop-assistants and labourers, and although their working motto may be said to have been, "Class warfare can wait till race warfare is disposed of", yet it was clear that Communism would still have to be reckoned with.

Mohamed Hatta's Return. It was at this juncture that Mohamed Hatta, "the brightest star in the native movement" and one whose overt nationalism has an appreciable alloy of class struggle, returned to Java after completing a course of study at the Faculty of Commerce and Economics in Rotterdam where he naturally associated freely with European Communists. His arrival gave a new lease of life to the nationalist movement, as represented by the operations of the *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia* and its allied bodies. Though the motive force behind this movement was still racial rather than Communist, the methods employed in its development seemed to have been borrowed from Moscow, and Mohamed Hatta and his colleagues displayed an alarming readiness to accept a helping hand from whatever quarter it might be proffered. By the end of 1932, it was evident that a storm was brewing, and in the early months of the following year nationalist leaders showed many signs of becoming more openly hostile to authority and of tending more towards

Communist theory and practice. Civil resistance was being practised in several places ; the economic condition of the masses was worse than for many years past and isolated cases of refusal to pay taxes had occurred ; reductions in official salaries had evoked violent criticism, notably in the navy and the schools ; and it seemed almost as though the Dutch had forgotten the lessons of 1926 and 1927. In February, naval discontent culminated, first in mass refusal of duty at Soerabaya, and later in the humiliating mutiny in the warship *Zeven Provinciën*. Inquiry into these incidents revealed more than a suspicion of Communist intrigue, and membership of certain organisations was subsequently prohibited to Government servants. By the end of July, however, the outspokenness and open hostility to authority of the " nationalist " leaders had reached such a pitch that even the proverbial tolerance of the Dutch was exhausted. It caused no surprise, therefore, when Soekarno was arrested on the 1st August 1933 and when the Dutch authorities simultaneously announced that they proposed forthwith to enact a decree imposing restrictions on the right of assembly of the *Partai Indonesia* and the *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia*. The official spokesman reminded the public of Government's previous forbearance and of the results which attended it and expressed the hope and expectation that the limitation of these parties' activities might obviate the necessity for further measures. If, however, the desired result were not obtained, such further action would be taken as might be necessary to protect the people from harmful influences. Other arrests followed at intervals but, although the situation showed a marked outward improvement, an undercurrent of hostile political agitation continued, fostered more and more as time passed by the *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, a frankly Communist association of Javanese and Sumatran students in Holland at the head of which was Rustom Effendi, an important member of the Communist Party of Holland. Foremost among those responsible for the continuance of the campaign were Mohamed Hatta and his fellow-members of the *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia* who, though they were at pains to conceal their movements and activities, paid little or no real heed to the warning which the authorities had given. The result was that on the 25th February

1934, six of the most prominent organisers of the P. N. I., including Mohamed Hatta himself, were arrested. There were more arrests later in the year, which, if they did not result in the complete suppression of the movement, at least made the reconstitution of the party an uphill task, which could only be performed in the teeth of official opposition supported, when necessary, by police action.

An Exposition of Official Policy. A few days after the arrest of Mohamed Hatta and his confederates, the Government of the Dutch East Indies published a *communiqué* explaining why these measures had been necessary. A part of this new exposition of Dutch policy is worthy of reproduction: "It is naturally impossible to publish all the valid reasons", it ran, "but it can be said that the leaders had, by underground action, set out to make illusory the measures taken by the Government. The method was none other than the method which has been followed in various other lands on clear instigation of the Comintern.

"Though there has been no immediate danger for the community, the Government was obliged, for the prevention of worse developments, to curb this revolutionary activity.

"In accordance with the standpoint of the Government that the measures taken in the interest of law and order shall not go further than the circumstances justify, the steps taken have been confined to rendering the principal leaders harmless. How far further steps may be necessary will depend on the further development of revolutionary anti-Government action. The Government hopes, however, that the measures now taken may have satisfactory results."

The Foreign Bureau. The means by which Moscow has sought to influence subversive movements in the Dutch East Indies are the more interesting because they have a parallel in French Indo-China in recent times and also in India from 1926 onwards. The revival of interest which Mohamed Hatta's return engendered is well exemplified by the speeches made at the thirteenth

plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International held in Moscow in the winter of 1933. Representatives of the Communist Parties of Holland and Indonesia were present and advocated the immediate strengthening of the alliance between the workers in the two countries in order to build up and fortify, with Comintern assistance, the illegal Communist Party in the Dutch East Indies which was said to be sadly lacking in revolutionary leadership. For several months before this meeting was held, however, there had been many signs of a greater output of constructive effort on the part of the *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, which seemed destined to become the Comintern's agency in these matters. In June 1934, a Foreign Bureau of the *Partij Kommunistische Indonesia* was formed in Holland comprising Rustom Effendi, an important Javanese Communist named Achmat, and an anonymous representative of the Comintern. The new Bureau's chief duties were the production and circulation of suitable reading matter, the formulation of demands for indigenous labour unions and propaganda amongst unemployed youths and seamen. It seems, too, that the Bureau is to have a hand in the selection and dispatch of students for training in Moscow. The first issue of the Bureau's journal, emanating from an address in Belgium, made its appearance in Java at the end of July and gave a still clearer insight into the various ways in which the Bureau hopes to be able to assist the movement in the Dutch East Indies. It will form a link between the scattered Communists in and out of Indonesia and all who are willing to fight for independence or to strengthen the P. K. I. as a section of the Communist International. It will encourage the formation of "cells" and district committees, which will work under a newly constituted central committee in Batavia, and will also assist this latter body in its endeavours to establish contact with the masses through peasant parties, labour unions, mutual aid societies, etc. It will give advice as to how the illegal side of this work can be performed—indeed, this first issue recommended the adoption of certain elementary rules for secret work which are much the same as those prescribed for Communist Parties in India and other parts of the Communist world.

The Eastern Line of Attack. Towards the end of 1931 information was received that a "Dutch East Indies Bureau" had been formed (probably in Singapore), "firstly and foremostly to re-establish the P. K. I.", but "secondly to find ways and means as soon as possible to establish good connections with the Far Eastern Bureau and the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat", and "thirdly, to assist in all possible ways similar work done by the C. P. M. (Communist Party of Malaya) in establishing our movement amongst the Malay races". Inquiries by the Straits Settlements police eventually unearthed in Singapore a group of Javanese and Sumatrans, consisting mainly of those who had fled their country after the rebellion in 1926-7. Amongst them were representatives of nearly all the various parties which go to the making of political Indonesia, and there was also a leavening of pure Communists with an "international" outlook which quickly attracted Moscow's inquisitive attention. Led by a Sumatran Malay called Jamaluddin Tamin, this group rejoiced in the name of *Partai Republik Indonesia* and its primary aim was, as its name implied, the overthrow of Dutch rule in the East Indies. Further investigation proved that Jamaluddin Tamin, its founder, had been in close touch with Tan Malaka while the latter was in Shanghai. His association with a man so high in the Comintern's service heavily discounted Tamin's emphatic protestations that his activities were in no way anti-British, and these protestations did not, therefore, prevent his arrest by the Singapore police at the end of 1932 when the case against him was strong enough to warrant his deportation. The group survived, however, and although the majority of the fifty or so who make up its present membership are probably more concerned with schemes for the liberation of the East Indies than with Communist intrigue, it is, nevertheless, beyond question that the Malayan Communist Party has found from amongst its "internationally minded" constituents helpers to prepare Malay propaganda in furtherance of the local racial movement.

The Response From Within. Despite these attacks from the west and the east, however, there are at present scarcely any indications of native Communist

activity within the Dutch East Indies—though the effect of the visit of the Chinese representative* of the International of Seamen and Harbourworkers remains to be seen. The most noteworthy and almost the only definite recent instance was an attempt in July 1934 by R. M. Soekardjo, an old-time Communist who had newly regained his freedom, to form a revolutionary association, with a membership drawn from amongst the sailors who were dismissed from the Navy after the mutiny in 1933. Soekardjo is known to have been in correspondence with Rustom Effendi, but as he was promptly rearrested, he was unable to obtain a footing of any importance. But the prevalence of orderly conditions in the Dutch East Indies at the present time reflects no real discredit on Moscow's capacity to foment revolution; rather must it be set to the credit of the Dutch authorities who have shown a commendable determination to keep their territory free from revolutionary dangers which have beset them both from within and from without.

Tan Malaka. No history of Communism in the Dutch East Indies would be complete which did not take account of Tan Malaka who has been aptly described as "the Roy of Javanese Communism". When it is recalled that he was one of the special agents selected by the Far Eastern Bureau for work in Rangoon and Burma, his history is particularly interesting from an Indian point of view. A Malay from the west coast of Sumatra, Tan Malaka, who is at present about thirty-seven years of age, was formerly a school-teacher, but he soon attracted so much attention as a virulent propagandist of the Communist creed that he was arrested and sentenced to banishment to one of the more remote portions of the Dutch archipelago. At his own request, however, his sentence was commuted to one of permanent deportation from the Dutch East Indies, and he left for Holland in March 1922. Since then, he has paid several visits to Moscow, and there is abundant evidence to show that while he was in Europe he was in close and sympathetic touch with M. N. Roy, whose story will be told at a later stage in this book. In 1924-5 he was in Canton where he held (under Moscow)

* *Vide* pages 91-2.

the position of "Propagandist for the Pacific Area", while intercepted correspondence, written partly in a secret code, revealed the fact that in September 1925 he was in Chiangmai, a town in Siam close to the Burma-Siam border, from where he was almost certainly arranging for the establishment of a secret centre in Singapore. Two years later he was deported from Manila to Amoy, though it was thought at the time that he would probably return to the Philippines. He may have done so, because it was not till the beginning of 1931, when he was found to be in hiding in Amoy, that his whereabouts became known again.

Tan Malaka was educated in Holland, speaks both Dutch and English, and is obviously an intelligent and dangerous type of agitator, the fortuitous discovery of whose plans to visit Burma in Moscow's interest is a matter for no little congratulation. His arrest in Hong Kong on the 10th October 1932, while on his way from Shanghai to Siam to discuss, so he avers, with the leaders of the *Partai Republik Indonesia* whether the time had come for action in the Dutch East Indies, is even more so. Tan Malaka was banished from Hong Kong and chose China as his destination. He is believed to have returned to Amoy and to be still living there, although there have been frequent rumours during 1933 and 1934 of visits paid by him to Malaya. He is known by the Chinese name of Tan Min Siong and can easily pass as a Chinese, as he is a fluent speaker of the Hokkien dialect.

PART THREE

India's Own Troubles

CHAPTER 12.

THE BIRTH OF INDIAN COMMUNISM.

Some Early Communist Pronouncements. The history of Indian Communism reaches back to the very early days of the Bolshevik régime in Russia, when the possibility of attacking England through her eastern possessions, particularly India, was already present to the minds of the Moscow leaders. In December 1918, the wireless stations of the Soviet Government broadcast a report of a memorandum handed to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet by an "Indian delegation", in the name of the "Peoples of India". The memorandum called upon the Soviet for assistance and ended with an expression of confidence that the days of England were numbered and that free Russia would stretch out a fraternal hand to oppressed Indians. Messages sent out a year later spoke of the facts that the Russian Communist Party had decided "to take concrete measures to spread revolution in the East" and that the Third International was about to establish sections in oriental countries. On the 9th February 1924, Moscow turned her eyes more directly on India, and speaking through Chicherin, proclaimed that, "Future India must stand at the head of the free Eastern Republics." These declarations, selected more or less at random, could be supplemented almost *ad infinitum* from the voluminous early writings of prominent Communists in the *International Press Correspondence* and elsewhere. There is evidence also to show that they are no chance expressions of a vague intention, but rather the deliberate avowal of an abiding purpose—the calculated statement of a policy which is steadily and remorselessly being put into execution.

Manabendra Nath Roy's Early History. It was in 1920 that Manabendra Nath Roy, the father of Indian Communism, made his first appearance in Russia. After a hurried departure from India in 1915, when, as Narendra Nath Bhattacharji, he absconded from bail in

a case of terrorist dacoity, Roy made a protracted tour of the Far East and eventually found his way to America where he was indicted in the San Francisco conspiracy case. He again absconded and crossed the border into Mexico, whence he departed in 1920 for Europe and for Moscow, the scene of his greatest revolutionary achievements. Amongst other missions on which his masters in the Comintern dispatched him were one to Afghanistan during the *hijrat* movement in 1920 and another to China during the disturbances there in 1926-27. On each of these occasions the task allotted to him consisted of corrupting, by means of subversive propaganda and otherwise, loyal Indians (Muslims in the former case and Sikhs in the latter) and assisting in the plots of those who were already disaffected. He was helped in this work by his wife, Evelyn, *née* Trent, an American lady whose views on Communism were similar to his own. Roy was also placed in charge of a propaganda school at Tashkent, and was compelled to seek refuge in France in 1923 after the anti-Bolshevik *coup* in Germany, where he was working at the time. He was expelled from France also early in 1925. Wherever he has gone Roy has left behind him a trail of anti-British conspiracy and intrigue and his capture and imprisonment in 1931 is an achievement which the police in India may well regard as important.

Roy as Moscow's Indian Adviser. Arrived in Europe, Roy quickly placed himself at the head of a small but extremely virile group of other malcontents, who, like himself, found the atmosphere of post-war Berlin and neo-revolutionary Moscow, more congenial than that of their native India. The inevitable rivalries, of course, occurred even at this early stage in the proceedings, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya (Chattarji), who had appeared on the scene several years earlier, being Roy's chief opponent. Roy overcame all opposition, however, and succeeded in securing his own recognition by the Moscow leaders as the spokesman of "Indian nationalists". Ambitious, energetic and unscrupulous, Roy managed to retain the confidence of the Soviet to an extraordinary degree and apparently succeeded in so magnifying his achievements that he was regarded as

having gone a long way towards the promotion of Communism in India.

The Foundations of Communism in India. It was when the first of Roy's and Chattopadhyaya's following began to drift back to India, the finished products of Moscow's infant Oriental Academy, that Communism first came to India. In the vanguard were Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukharji, who returned to India, the one on Roy's behalf in 1921 and the other in 1923 as an agent of Chattopadhyaya. Both had been members of terrorist organisations in Bengal prior to their departure abroad and both were sent back as Communist emissaries to renew their old acquaintances and to seek from amongst them recruits to the new "ideology". But of these two, more anon: their history is too engrossing to be dealt with so summarily as the limits of this particular chapter would seem to demand. Slow to take root in a country where the feudal spirit and hereditary principles are so ingrained as in India, the Bolshevik movement grew no less surely on that account. By 1924 its menace to India's peace and prosperity had become sufficiently serious to necessitate the first important Communist conspiracy case (I exclude the Peshawar conspiracy case of 1923), and in February of that year a formal plaint was lodged at Cawnpore against a selection of eight (including the absent Roy) of 168 Indian Communists whose names the "brief" of the case contained, the charge being that of conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India.

The Cawnpore Conspiracy Case and After. For various reasons, only four were actually brought to trial and convicted, but their removal hit the movement hard, for leaders (even of the calibre of Shaukat Usmani, Sripad Amrit Dange and Muzaffar Ahmad) were rare in those days. M. N. Roy was still at work abroad, having by this time found a place in the Executive Committee of the Communist International (I.K.K.I.), and it soon became clear that the setback was only temporary. In July 1924 (before all the stages of the case had actually been concluded) the Communist International decided to adopt Roy's suggestion that a new Indian Communist Party should be formed as a branch of the Communist

International. Three months later, a correspondent to a Calcutta newspaper announced that "in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case it has been settled that to have faith in Communism in itself is no offence. Thus the fear of the law against Communism has been removed", while another newspaper announced the open formation of an Indian Communist Party with branches at Madras, Bombay, and Cawnpore, and added that "an all-India Communist conference will be held in three months' time". This, the first conference of its kind, was duly held in the last week of December 1925. So, too, in November 1924, Roy wrote of the Cawnpore case that it had had good effects as well as bad: "People have got used to hearing things which simply terrified them before. . . . We must reap the benefit of this situation. . . . We must prepare to begin the struggle for the legalization of our party."

The events of the next few years were to make it very clear that Communism had come to stay, and that nothing short of the collapse of the Soviet system itself would ever eradicate manifestations of sympathy for that system, at any rate in the urban areas of India. The most that the authorities could hope to do was to mitigate, by constant watchfulness and by judicious and timely action, both within the narrow limits of the law and in the broader economic field, the evils and dangers of the preaching of class hatred to those who are ill-adapted to receive such doctrines with thought and discrimination. This was the position at the time of the institution of the Meerut conspiracy case in 1929 and is roughly the position to-day.

CHAPTER 13.

THE PERIOD OF REGENERATION.

Ar. Estimate of Roy's Early Achievements.

There can hardly be a better exposition of the present Communist policy of turning every subversive movement to its own account than the history of Indian Communism in the years 1924 to 1928, which is roughly the period covered by Sir David Petrie's book already referred to. In summarising the degree of progress achieved during that period, Sir David Petrie showed how utterly bankrupt M. N. Roy had been in the way of practical achievement, and went on to say : " It would be quite erroneous, however, to suppose that Roy's singularly barren record can be taken to mean that Communism has obtained no footing whatever in India. For instance, many recent articles in Indian-edited papers could be cited to show that the Press is becoming increasingly alive to the immense power of mass action as a political weapon. Communism, as expounded by Mr. Saklatvala during his recent tour*, earned appreciative comment in several quarters which could not all be dismissed as irresponsible. It is hardly to be supposed that such papers accept the doctrines of Communism with their ultimate implications (the reverse is almost certainly true), but it is indisputable that the mass action idea has come to stay, as also the impression that, as this particular weapon broke the dominion of the Tsars in Russia, so it may again be used to win India her freedom from the overlordship of Great Britain. There are many clear evidences also of a growing recognition on the part of the Indian National Congress (and cognate political bodies) of the need of organising the labouring masses in order to associate them with the general movement for the country's political advancement. Then there are the organisation of Workers' and Peasants' Parties, and the growing intrusion into Labour movements of persons working for avowedly Communist purposes. The address of Bhupendra Nath Dutt to the Political Sufferers'

*Early in 1927.

Conference at Gauhati, no less than the association of individual revolutionaries with Communism, could be fittingly quoted to support M. N. Roy's contention that the 'tendency of "going to the masses" is gaining ground among the nationalist intellectuals of advanced views'. The penetration by Communism of indigenous revolutionary movements—notably the Sikh—is also a feature the significance of which it would be dangerous to ignore. All these various manifestations must be regarded as so many symptoms that can be diagnosed in only one particular way."

Doubts of Roy's Ability. To this appreciation, which was written in September 1927, it will be necessary to add a brief description of the events on which it was based and of one or two incidents which were just outside its scope, before proceeding to deal, in another chapter, with the more serious events of the year 1928 which must indubitably be classed as the dangers of which the above appreciation gave warning. It was during the period covered by Sir David Petrie's volume that the Communist International began to realize and correct its previous errors and to place less reliance on M. N. Roy's omniscience and infallibility where Indian affairs were concerned. From 1924 onwards new tactics became clearly discernible in Moscow's handling of the Indian situation. The Communist note in propaganda, where it was likely to offend the native populations, was suppressed, and nationalism was exploited as an unconscious means of furthering Communist aims. It was at this time, too, that the indifferent quality of Roy's Indian agents, practically all of them greedy opportunists lacking in scruples and principles and even in common honesty, began to attract attention at headquarters where demands were made for a greater return for the vast sums of money expended. Although Roy's reply to these demands was to lay impudent claim to such outbreaks as the Moplah rising and the *Aika* movement in the United Provinces as the work of his agents, he did not completely set at rest the doubts and questionings mentioned, and Zinoviev demanded and obtained the adoption of a scheme "of direct contact between the Comintern and the proletarian organisations and parties

of British India, ignoring the local Communist Party'' (and presumably also M. N. Roy, the then directive agency').

Changed Tactics—European Supervision. The orientation of this new policy and the wane of Roy's monopoly of power caused the dispatch to India, in spite of Roy's vehement protests, of the first of a series of British Communist agents in the form of Percy E. Glading, *alias* R. Cochrane, of the National Minority Movement. It is true that Glading arrived in India armed with credentials from M. N. Roy, but the disparaging report on Communism in India which he rendered on his return makes it very clear that he was by no means an agent of Roy. He was followed by George Allison, *alias* Donald Campbell, a prominent member of the British Communist Party, who arrived in Bombay in April 1926. Allison had visited Moscow in 1924 and had remained there till July 1925, and was sent to India "to develop the left wing inside the Trades Union Congress" but "to keep out of party politics except in an advisory capacity if necessary". This latter he failed to do and the prominent part which he took in labour affairs in Bombay and Bengal eventually led to his discovery and apprehension in November 1926 and his subsequent prosecution and conviction on charges of using as genuine a forged document and of having counterfeited the seal and stamp of the London Foreign Office on his passport. He was sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment in all, and was deported on the expiry of his sentence. It is of some interest that he was again sentenced at the Winchester Assizes in November 1931 to three years' penal servitude for attempting to provoke mutiny in His Majesty's Navy.

Spratt, Bradley and Hutchinson. Allison's place was taken by Philip Spratt, who arrived in India in December 1926, ostensibly on behalf of a firm of book-sellers but in reality to open in India a Labour Publishing House through which Soviet money could be received and distributed. In actual fact, he took up the work which Allison had compulsorily abandoned, and, industrious and capable Communist that he was, gave the

Indian group not only the benefit of his advice and experience, but, what was just as important, a not inconsiderable amount of financial assistance. Spratt was joined in September 1927 by Benjamin Francis Bradley, also a capable and devoted worker, who took a similarly active part in the organisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and in work amongst the employees of the cotton mills and the railways. The last of this almost unbroken chain of foreign agents was a man of less forceful character, Hugh Lester Hutchinson, who came to Bombay in September 1928 after a short sojourn in Berlin where he came into close contact with Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya. Soon after his arrival in Bombay he became involved in the Communist movement there, but his weakness of character and his dalliance with Chattopadhyaya's sister, the communistically-minded Mrs. Suhasini Nambiar, rendered largely innocuous any harm that his upbringing (his mother is to this day a rabid member of the Communist Party in Manchester) might have caused him to attempt to do.

Other Agents from Abroad. Before leaving this subject, it would be as well to refer to two other Communist agents who visited India at the end of 1928 when the flood-tide of Communism was at its height. Each sought to help the furtherance of Moscow's aims, but fortunately neither was allowed to remain in India long enough to do any great harm. The first was J. F. Ryan, an important member of the Communist Party of Australia and the then chairman of the New South Wales Trade and Labour Councils. He arrived in India on the 18th November 1928, after attending a meeting of the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat in Shanghai. His mission was to attend the annual session of the All-India Trades-Union Congress at Jharia on the 22nd December 1928, in order to secure the affiliation of that body to the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat and thus link up the fight against imperialism in India with that in the Far East. This he failed to do, though his speech at the Congress created a very favourable impression. The other was J. W. Johnstone, an American emissary of Chattopadhyaya's newly-formed Berlin organisation, the League Against Imperialism, who was sent on a similar

mission on 'he League's behalf. He had freely associated with Spratt, Muzaffar Ahmed and other well-known Indian Communists and had delivered several most objectionable speeches before he was arrested and deported, with his mission only partly fulfilled. The brief appearance of these two minor actors on the Indian political stage would not have been worth mentioning were it not for the impression which they gave of the interest caused beyond the seas by the dawn of Indian Communism. There can be no doubt that this impression, coupled with numerous expressions of sympathy, some verbal and some in the more solid form of monetary assistance, raised the Indian Communists in their own estimation and provided a source of inspiration for further and greater efforts. The meaning of the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite!" was made clearer to Indian labourers.

Indian Leadership. Meanwhile, the four original conspirators had been released from the Cawnpore jail, three at least of them (Muzaffar Ahmed, Dange and Shaukat Usmani) to resume old friendships, to revive old associations, and to take up the threads where the Cawnpore case had broken them. Meanwhile, too, Moscow's Eastern academies had not been idle and their output was producing in India a new generation of Communist leaders, each with his following, some more, some less, but none inconsiderable.

CHAPTER 14.

THE APPROACH TO MEERUT.

The Success of the New Methods. By the autumn of 1927 the prosecution of the new policy outlined in the previous chapter had provided the Indian Communist Party with a substantial stock of new leaders, and the stage was thus set for the next step in the struggle which Moscow desired. An attempt will, therefore, now be made to show how, after the comparative failure of M. N. Roy's machinations to achieve any tangible results, the new methods met with surprising success and brought about simultaneous upheavals in several of India's industrial centres.

The combined (though not necessarily co-ordinated, for internecine jealousies still persisted to some extent) efforts of all the elements described produced a remarkable and rapid increase of Communist influence in Labour circles generally and in the trades-union movement in particular. By April 1928, the penetration of the trades-union movement was so complete that the extremists, as represented by the Workers' and Peasants' Parties, had not only secured a voice in the control of the movement, but had obtained—particularly in Bombay—a definite hold over the workers themselves. The influence of the moderate element decreased in proportion until, before the end of the year, control had passed almost entirely into the extremists' hands. (Indeed, "control" is hardly the appropriate word, for the Communist leaders had, by their reckless advocacy of the doctrines of Lenin, soon brought into being forces which they were quite incapable of controlling.) Communism had become more to India than the wordy vapourings of a few unbalanced semi-intellectuals. The oft-reiterated policy—"First disturb the masses' placid contentment and then inculcate the principles of Communism"—was being pursued with vigour under the able guidance alike of European emissaries and trained indigenous workers.

The Intermediate Stages of Communism in Operation. When, therefore, discontent reared its head amongst the cotton workers in Bombay at the beginning of 1928, and amongst the railway employees at Lillooah a few weeks later, the Workers' and Peasants' Parties were able to take full and speedy advantage of the opportunities so presented. Three years' Communist theory was rapidly translated into practice, first in Bombay, then in Bengal, and later, to a lesser extent, in Upper India, until it became evident that a handful of agitators had succeeded in temporarily paralyzing essential services and important industries to the serious inconvenience, if not actual danger, of the law-abiding population of the areas affected. Riots became the order of the day ; savage onslaughts were several times made upon the police ; loyal workers were terrorized into submission by stray assaults and by threats of starvation ; organised attacks were made upon property ; and every effort was made, both by speeches and by printed propaganda, to stir up hatred, not only against the servants of the Crown, but also against the employers of labour, the landowners and the money-lenders. As the campaign progressed, Philip Spratt, in earnest pursuance of the avowed policy of the Communist International, sought other fields to conquer. Having failed to turn to good account some alleged grievances of the Mymensingh peasantry, he enlisted the assistance of Sohan Singh " Josh " in an attempt to plant the seeds of revolt in the Punjab. In this he was hardly more successful, though a Peasants' and Workers' Party was formed in that province which passed a number of objectionable resolutions, some of which contained an exhortation to the public to refuse to pay land revenue and canal-water rates, while, at the Party conference which was held in Lyallpur in the autumn of 1928, Communist doctrines were proclaimed with greater candour than on any previous public occasion. It was Spratt's untiring energy, too, that brought into being a Workers' and Peasants' Party in the United Provinces which held its inaugural conference at Meerut in October 1928. The speeches were extremely objectionable, and Spratt himself openly preached direct action against the landlords and the Government. Within a month branches

had been formed in Delhi, Meerut, Goniakhpur, Jhansi and Allahabad.

An Appreciation of Spratt's Activities. Spratt also visited many other towns in India on a similar mission and, in the words of the Bench of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad which later heard the appeal in the Meerut conspiracy case, "he threw himself wholeheartedly into Indian Communist politics". In all his actions he showed an honesty and tenacity of purpose which were worthy of a better cause. His attitude is, perhaps, best summed up in his own words, taken from his statement before the Court of Session at Meerut, "I did what I could to carry out the policy of the Communist International, in the name of the British working class and of the Communist Party, by co-operation with what I thought was the only body actively and effectively working for the national revolution in India at that time, that is, the Workers' and Peasants' Party." To him and Muzaffar Ahmad is due in very great measure the striking success which attended the Party's efforts during 1928 and the spring of 1929. It has been written with authority that : "Spratt in particular was ubiquitous. He worked in 1927 mainly with the Bombay group, in 1928 with the Bengal Party. He played a large part in uniting the Punjab groups into one party and in the formation of those in the United Provinces into another. And all the time he was carrying on correspondence with the conspirators on the Continent and in England, informing them of the progress of the work, discussing difficulties, receiving instructions ; while those conspirators in turn were receiving instructions, and, what is more, financial aid, for India from the head of the conspiracy in Moscow. Second only to him, was Muzaffar Ahmad, who, however autocratic he may have been, managed by voluminous correspondence to keep in touch not only with the workers abroad but also with all the other workers in India and saw to it that none was idle."

Spratt's Colleagues and Lieutenants. Much the same could be said of half a hundred others who, if they lacked Spratt's ability, were seriously infected by his energy and enthusiasm. The names of Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffar Ahmad and S. A. Dange have already been

mentioned, and their owners need no further introduction unless it be to say that their activities in the period between their release from the Cawnpore jail and the institution of the Meerut case, and their statements in the latter case, have revealed them in the light of incorrigible opponents of the existing order—"Communists standing fully pledged to the Communist programme". They are the only three of the Meerut convicts who have not regained their liberty at the time of writing, and any student of their past history will view the day of their release with considerable concern. Limitations of space prevent me from recording here the names of any but a select few of the others, but the histories of most of them may be read in the annals of the Meerut conspiracy case.

The Bombay Group. The ablest of Spratt's colleagues was Dr. G. M. Adhikari, who was sent to India only at the end of 1928 after having lived for some years in Germany. Prior to his return, he had been in close association with M. N. Roy and other Communists abroad and came back to the country of his birth with adequate credentials and with the avowed intention of furthering the aims and objects of the Communist International through the operations of the Communist Party of India and the Workers' and Peasants' Party. Although his arrest followed so quickly on his return that he had little or no time to demonstrate his practical ability as an organiser, he was instantly recognized by his fellow conspirators as a "specialist in organisation and tactics" and has, since 1929, both in and out of jail, given ample proof of his capabilities in this direction and as a draughtsman of theoretical theses and instructions for secret work. Other important members of the Bombay group were R. S. Nimbkar, S. S. Mirajkar and K. N. Joglekar. All three were members of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of India and took a prominent part in the foundation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in Bombay, the two last-named having acted as joint editors of the *Kranti*, the Party organ, while Mirajkar and Nimbkar each performed the duties of secretary for some time. Each played a most active part in the strikes in Bombay in 1928 and the tone of the numerous speeches which they then delivered (Nimbkar alone claims to have

made five hundred or more) showed clearly that their aim was to use the strikes as a means to a Communist end—for the preparation of revolution. None of them made any secret of their aims when they were arraigned at Meerut. Mirajkar eventually succeeded Nimbkar as the group leader in charge of education and propaganda when the latter took charge of the peasants' group. Joglekar's chief work was in the trade-unions and the Indian National Congress, whose session in Gauhati he attended at the end of 1926 as a representative of the Communist Party of India.

B. F. Bradley. But the strikes in Bombay in 1928 would certainly not have reached the pitch they did had it not been for the advice and active encouragement which B. F. Bradley gave to his Indian collaborators. The evidence produced in the Meerut case shows that he took an active interest as a "Communist fraction" in a number of unions (particularly the G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union and the B. B. and C. I. Railway Union), and that he also played a large part in the organisation and conduct of the textile strike and in the formation of unions of Port Trust and railway employees, municipal workers, oil workers and tramwaymen in Bombay and, later, of jute workers and transport workers in Bengal as well. He came to India with the claim that "the only way out of the present-day world economic crisis is the revolutionary way—capitalism must be smashed and socialism built up from the ruins thereof"—and he later admitted in his statement before the Sessions Court that all his activities had been in accordance with that theory.

S. V. Ghate. Mention must also be made of S. V. Ghate who, though he was a member of the Bombay group, served in reality a wider area. If a distinction can be made between the Bombay and Bengal groups it is that the former was closer to the Communist Party of India and the latter to the Workers' and Peasants' Party, and Ghate, in Bombay, fulfilled much the same functions as Muzaffar Ahmad, as the general secretary of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and editor of its organ, the *Ganavani*, did in Calcutta. A Communist since the first conference in Cawnpore in 1925, Ghate's best work for the Party was done in a secretarial capacity.

First as a joint secretary, and later as the general secretary, of the Communist Party of India, his main responsibility was the maintenance of the line of communication with Communists abroad, without which the Indian movement could never have subsisted. He was naturally also in the closest touch with those who were carrying out Moscow's instructions in different parts of the country, and his activities in these directions made it necessary for him to equip himself with a series of cover addresses, many of which were discovered when his belongings were searched at the time of his arrest. He may, in fact, be described as having been the linchpin of that subversive movement which he himself described as being "the dynamic force which organises the workers by participating in their daily struggle, and leads them to the final seizure of power". It was said of him in the committal order in the Meerut case that, "Ghate, like a ghost, was pervasive but not tangible. His influence was great and his name comes everywhere, but he worked mainly behind the scenes. One gets an impression that he deliberately kept out of local activities so as to be the more free for his secretarial duties."

The Calcutta Group. The group in Bombay formed so close a corporation that the records of their individual activities made a more or less connected story, but the Bengal group was much less of a happy family, was unable to command so large a share of the foreign resources as its sister group in Bombay and was composed, on the whole, of less able individuals. It was probably for these reasons that Spratt made Calcutta his headquarters from the middle of 1928 till his arrest in March of the following year. The ablest of his lieutenants in Bengal (apart, of course, from Muzaffar Ahmad) was probably Shib Nath Banerji, the Judas Iscariot of the Meerut case. Having acquired a full working knowledge of Communist aims and methods by a course of training in the Eastern University in Moscow, Banerji returned to Bengal in 1926, and quickly came into association, first with George Allison, and later with such men as Philip Spratt and Gopendra Nath Chakravarty, whose history is written in Chapter 20. Banerji lent to this latter group of Communists his untiring support and services throughout

the serious industrial trouble which swept Calcutta and its environs during 1928 and also played a not inconsiderable part in the organisation of unions of railwaymen, mill workers, tramwaymen, etc. He also travelled further afield to Asansol, Jharia and Ishapore, at which latter place he helped Spratt to form an Ordnance Workers' Union composed of workers in the Government Rifle Factory and became its first vice-president. He was eventually acquitted in the Meerut case, but the Judge described the evidence against him as "a formidable record" and went on to say: "In my opinion there remains room for the gravest suspicion in his case, but I cannot feel quite convinced that he was ever a member of this conspiracy. I therefore give him the benefit of the doubt." Cf Shamsul Huda, another important member of the Bengal group, the Sessions Judge remarked that "It is true that the case against Shamsul Huda, accused, is not based on a very long period of work or a very large number of activities, but we have it that he was a member of the Communist Party of India and a member of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party". (He was, incidentally, a member of the Central Executive Committee of the former body.) In his statement to the Court, Shamsul Huda gloried in his membership of these bodies and took as his own the concluding sentences of Marx' and Engels' earliest manifesto, "Communists scorn to hide their views and aims; they openly declare that their purposes can only be achieved by the forcible overthrow of the whole extant social order." The activities of which the trying Judge made mention included several highly seditious speeches delivered at times of great political excitement, active participation in at least one strike and underground work amongst transport workers and dock workers.

Gopal Basak. Mention has already been made of Spratt's abortive efforts to organise the peasants in the north of the Mymensingh district, and it now seems necessary to refer briefly to Gopal Chandra Basak, who acted as Spratt's agent in Eastern Bengal. Of poor physique and a studious disposition, Basak's chief importance was as the Party's depot for Communist literature. His father is a bookseller in Dacca and Gopal Chandra himself assisted in the business and had, therefore, peculiar

facilities for this type of work, and there is no doubt that the leaders all over India found this bookshop most useful. But Basak's activities were not confined to the production and dissemination of literature. He was also given a good deal of work in Dacca itself, where he refounded the Dhakeswari Cotton Mill Workers' Union, became its secretary, established study circles for its members, and busied himself with a strike in which Spratt had ordered his participation. He took part, too, in a strike of the local scavengers, and helped Spratt in his peasant activities in Mymensingh mentioned above. Shortly before his arrest, he formulated plans for the establishment of other local unions of railway and jute workers—and there can be no doubt that, had he not been left single-handed (except for a short period when Gopendra Nath Chakravarty was sent to his aid), he would eventually have brought to Dacca trouble quite as serious as Calcutta and Bombay were experiencing during the period in question.

The Group in Northern India—P. C. Joshi. Puran Chand Joshi's chief claim to fame in the Communist world rests on the fact that he proved a capable and energetic general secretary of the branch of the Workers' and Peasants' Party which Spratt inaugurated in the United Provinces at the end of 1928 and which was a thriving fledgling when the Meerut case was instituted. In his capacity as secretary, though still a student at a university, he maintained a considerable correspondence with Spratt and Muzaffar Ahmad on a variety of organisational problems, but his personal inclinations and his age made him concentrate rather on the spreading of the Communist gospel amongst those of his own years and social standing. He himself instituted and maintained a system of study circles as a means of providing "a recruiting ground for future party workers": he also started the *Krantikari* for purposes of propaganda, frequently contributed to it himself, and provided money for its upkeep. Himself an omnivorous reader, he was constantly impressing upon his friends the urgent need for a scientific study of Communism. "so that from the green room we may step onto the actual stage". This was his main work, but he also put his theoretical studies to practical use in his

frequent denunciations of the Indian National Congress and his supervision of the work of those subordinate to him amongst railwaymen, peasants and sweepers, in Delhi and the United Provinces. For all his youth, Joshi was already a confirmed Communist when he was arrested, as several ably written documents found in his possession testified and as his statement before the Court of Session confirmed. "Armed mass insurrection", he said, "is the highest stage of the upward growth of revolution. . . . We, therefore, hail and salute the final armed mass uprising of those who are slaves to-day but will be free after it. . . . The problem which is to be decided, however, is the when and the how of the armed insurrection." It was to this problem that Joshi was vigorously applying his mind in the United Provinces and Delhi, and his untiring energy and the correctness of his "ideology" eventually found him a place on the National Executive Committee of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party. His desperate and indefatigable enthusiasm for the Communist cause and all that it stands for is rivalled only by that of Philip Spratt, his guide and mentor, and, on that account alone, Joshi must be regarded as one of the most dangerous of those whom the Meerut case fortunately and opportunely removed from the scene of their activities.

Punjabi Leaders. A reference has already been made to Sohan Singh "Josh", and it only remains here to dispose of the case of another Punjabi worker, Abdul Majid. Majid became a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of India in 1925 after a visit to Russia, and, from then onwards, he took a prominent part in the organisation and operations of the *Kirti Kisan* Party, and of the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* of later notoriety. He assisted Spratt in the formation of the United Provinces and Delhi branch of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of which P. C. Joshi later assumed control, and was largely instrumental in the establishment of a Press Workers' Union in Lahore. All his actions were in consonance with his subsequent statement before the Court of Session—"I wholeheartedly sympathize with the scientific programme of the Communist International which it has put before the world for a world revolution. . . . We Communists in India are making efforts to bring about this revolution."

The Limitations of the Preceding Sketches. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the "potted histories" given above are merely intended to provide a little detailed description of some of the chief actors on the Communist stage and that they speak of only an infinitesimal part of the activities proved in the Meerut case against the individuals concerned. No reference has been made, for instance, to the cryptic and other letters which they wrote to each other and to their friends in London and Moscow, or to the funds which they received from abroad, or, in fact, to many others of the ingredients of the colossal conspiracy which it took many months for the police and the courts to unravel. Some of these subjects will be dealt with in a little more detail in the next two chapters, and my aim here has been solely to introduce to such of my readers as are unacquainted with them, a few personalities whose names will recur, if not in this volume, at any rate in the daily press when serious industrial or agrarian trouble next breaks out in India.

A Summary of Achievements. By the end of 1928, therefore, there was hardly a single public utility service or industry which had not been affected, in whole or in part, by the wave of Communism which swept the country during the year. Transport, industrial and agricultural workers of every description, clerks, policemen, colliers and even scavengers were amongst the many who were subjected to, if they did not fall under, the baneful influence of this whirlwind propaganda campaign which promised them the sweets of revolution if they would but raise their hands to grasp them.

The Youth Movement. Even youths of all classes were to be harnessed to the Communist car of destruction, and a network of study classes made its appearance alongside the shop and factory committees which the campaign had brought into being, with the object of training leaders from the rank and file. Of these S. V. Ghate wrote at the end of 1928 that, "the work under the youth section is conducted in the form of classes in which students have been taking part. These classes have not met with sufficient response." But although the Party did not meet with any very tangible success in this direction, yet Spratt, assisted by Dharani Goswami, P. C. Joshi and

others, had laid, by painstaking labours before his arrest, the foundations of an efficient youth movement which included a youth section of the Workers' and Peasants' Party known as the Young Comrades' League. To this particular part of the campaign Jawahar Lal Nehru, the son of the veteran Congress worker, the late Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, lent a ready hand. Speaking at the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference in Poona at the end of 1928, he said : " We must aim at the destruction of all imperialism, and the reconstruction of society on another basis. That basis must be one of co-operation, which is another name for socialism. Our national ideal must, therefore, be the establishment of a co-operative socialist commonwealth and our international ideal a world federation of socialist States. The voice that claims freedom must be the voice of revolt. When that voice is raised, England will bow to the inevitable."

The Effect on the Indian National Congress.

Such words from a prominent Congressman were, unfortunately, typical of the general attitude of Congress workers of the day. The session of the All-India National Congress which was convened in Calcutta in December 1928 reflected this pandering spirit. More than in any previous Congress, the Calcutta gathering showed an anxiety to appease the extremists. Resolutions were passed condemning the Public Safety Bill and the Trades' Disputes Bill, which were then on the legislative anvil, and it was decided that the Congress should take up the organisation of the workers and peasants as a part of its future programme of constructive work for non-co-operation. Some Communists even secured places on the All-India Congress Committee. While the Calcutta Congress was sitting, a huge demonstration of some 30,000 labourers marched in procession with red banners and took possession of the enclosure in spite of the protests of the Congress leaders. The labourers held a demonstration which lasted for over an hour before they were finally induced to depart. The incident was symbolic, not only of the Communists' hostility to mere " non-violent " nationalism, but also of the enormous increase in the influence and powers of organisation of the working classes under Communist direction.

The Effect on the Communists Themselves.

The degree of confidence which Indian Communists derived from the events of 1928 is well demonstrated by the proceedings of the first conference of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party held in Calcutta at the end of the year. Prior to the conference the Party had, as a whole, been working under a cloak, its policy and intentions being merely to permeate the ranks of the more important organisations, but in Calcutta it took up a defiant line of attack. In order to prepare the peasants for revolution, the Party would place before them a programme of their immediate needs of life. For the workers there would be a policy of strengthening the trades-union movement by all means, on the basis of forward economic and political demands and by resort to "direct action". All occasions were to be seized to draw the workers into political action by demonstrative means, strikes, etc. While acknowledging the tactical utility of non-violence, the Party made no fetish of it, though it agreed that the methods of secret preparation for an armed uprising were unsuited to conditions in India as they then were. In short, the Party's immediate objective, as revealed at these meetings, was the creation of an aggressive mentality among the workers, the peasants and the petty *bourgeoisie*, with a view to bringing about a violent revolution, first of a political and then of a social and economic kind. It should, perhaps, be added, in view of what is said later on about M. N. Roy's letter of instructions, that of the sixteen persons who were then elected to the National Executive Committee (four each from Bombay, Bengal, the Punjab and the United Provinces) no less than ten were either members of the Communist Party of India or admittedly Communists by conviction. The Party also affiliated itself to the League Against Imperialism.

Even when the usual allowances are made for the excessive exuberance which such occasions engender, there is still no doubt that a year's successful work, coupled with a lavish display of foreign interest, had enormously increased the prestige and confidence of the members of the Communist Party of India and had encouraged them to make still further efforts in pursuit

of their goal. Four years later, a Communist paper published in England contained the following note : " During the strike struggles of 1928-29 the workers of India emerged as a political force, a development of immense significance, and took an active part in the nation-wide struggle for independence. A new milestone was thus reached : the workers had realized for the first time their revolutionary rôle among the various forces for national emancipation."

Neglect of the Communist Party of India. But, though the Workers' and Peasants' Party had gone from strength to strength, there had been little or no sign of real activity on the part of its parent body, the Communist Party of India. The absence of evidence of the underground activities of a secret organisation such as the C. P. I. might, of course, have been due to a variety of causes ; but documents which were later exhibited at Meerut made it obvious that the Party's members had concentrated so much effort on the building up of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and on the conduct of its subsequent activities that the C. P. I. had perforce been almost entirely neglected. Small wonder that C. P. Dutt cryptically complained that " the Methodists and the Y. M. C. A. are becoming too much two names for the same thing ". To such a pass had things come in May 1928, that Ghate seriously suggested that the Workers' and Peasants' Party should control the Communist Party—a complete reversal of the orthodox procedure prescribed in Moscow. The constitution and programme of the C. P. I. had, it is true, been formulated in May 1927, and an executive committee was in existence and had met at Madras six months later, but drastic re-organisation was clearly necessary. At the urgent instance of both M. N. Roy and the Comintern, therefore, a new effort was made in December 1928 when all the interested persons had gathered in Calcutta for the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference. But before I attempt to describe what steps were taken, it is desirable to give some idea of the orthodox relations (laid down in Moscow) between the Communist Party of India and the Workers' and Peasants' Parties. This can best be done by exhibiting a working summary of a document

which fell into the hands of the Calcutta police in the summer of 1928.

The Assembly Letter. The document in question is generally known as the Assembly Letter because it was read out in the course of a debate in the Legislative Assembly on the 10th September 1928. Without going into the somewhat involved evidence on the subject, we may accept the findings of the Sessions Court at Meerut that it was written by M. N. Roy as a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in Moscow, that it was dispatched through Clemens Palme Dutt in London, and that Muzaffar Ahmad, to whom it was addressed, probably received another copy of it by a different route. It was dated the 30th December 1927 and was, therefore, the last of a series of historic documents of its kind which came from Roy's pen. The letter was originally assigned to "Central Committee Workers' and Peasants' Party", but the heading had been amended to read, "Central Committee (C. P. and Workers' and Peasants' Party)". The main subjects with which it dealt were : (1) the organisation of the C. P. I. and the W. P. P. and their interrelation, (2) international affiliation, (3) the co-ordination of the activities of these Parties with those of the emigrant section, and (4) financial matters.

Party Organisation. After remarking on the need for making known to the masses what it is that they really want—"the Communists will become the trusted leaders of the masses only by giving concrete form to the latter's unconscious demands"—Roy proceeded to lay down some general principles applicable to India and to explain the precise necessity of participation by the members of the Communist Party in the daily struggle. But neither Roy nor the Communist International, on whose behalf he was almost certainly writing, was under any delusions as to the legality of such participation, for the letter went on to point out that legality could only be had at the expense of the *raison d'être* of the Party—"Every little act of a real Communist is a blow to Imperialism and the Imperialist knows it ; therefore, if the Communist does not act secretly he must pass his life in prison." Roy

insisted, therefore, on the formation of an illegal Communist Party, but as legality is an essential prerequisite to the conduct of effective propaganda amongst the masses, a Workers' and Peasants' Party must also be built up to take the place of the Communist Party when the latter becomes illegal and to make open preparations for the great day when the Communist Party can assume the leadership of the open revolution. This "veiled Communist Party" was to be "a much broader organisation, a rallying ground of all exploited social elements (proletariat, peasantry and petty *bourgeoisie*)."

The Communists should enter the W. P. P., however, and, by virtue of their being the "conscious vanguard of the working class", they would be the driving force behind it. There followed a draft of the new Party's programme of which Roy wrote that, "the social elements ready to fight for this programme are not all necessarily Communists and never will be Communists, but, organised in the W. P. P., they will be under the influence of the proletariat and be led by the C. P. without subscribing to its programme of socialism." It is obvious that a Party so constructed stands a better chance of evading the clutches of the law than a full-blooded Communist Party, and it was for this reason that Roy added a word of criticism of the organisation as it then was. The Workers' and Peasants' Party was too openly identified with the Communist Party. "It is publicly known", he wrote, "that practically all the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party are the leaders of the Workers' and Peasants' Party. Of course, in fact it should be so, but the cat has been unnecessarily let out of the bag by publishing the list of the C. C. of the C. P." This defect must be rectified and the new committee of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party (of about a dozen members) should contain a majority of trades-union leaders under Communist influence, "as a guarantee that the Party will develop in the right direction". I have already shown that these instructions were faithfully carried out at the W. P. P. Congress in Calcutta in December 1928.

International Affiliation. On the second main question Roy wrote: "As far as the Workers' and Peasants' Party is concerned, the question is answered ;

it should affiliate itself with the League Against Imperialism. That will serve our purpose. Through that you will have the relations and aid you need, but you will not be condemned of having relations with Moscow. The W. P. P. can eventually become the recognized organ of the League in India." Of the Communist Party of India, the letter said : "The C. P. must unquestionably be a section of the Communist International. It is practically treated as such, but no formal request to this effect has yet come from our Party in India. . . . A Communist Party must be an organic part of the world Communist organisation. It cannot be otherwise and call itself 'Communist'. Those who smell 'foreign dictation' in this organisational principle of a body that carries on a relentless struggle throughout the world, are not Communists. They have a faulty conception of the international nature of the class struggle." Roy then proceeded to stigmatize affiliation (suggested by Saklatvala and Donald Campbell) with the Minority Movement in Great Britain as improper, and asserted that the correct position was that "the centres in Berlin and Paris are the agencies of the Communist International to look after Indian affairs ; the C. P. of India will have its relations with the Communist International through these centres and not through London."

The Foreign Bureau. Roy then passed on to the third main subject of his letter, of which he treated in the following words : "Indian Communists in emigration are members of the Communist Party of India and are automatically members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, and we expect to be treated by the comrades at home as such. We should not be looked upon as outsiders who could serve you only as financial agents. As members of the same Party, nationally and internationally, we must co-ordinate our efforts." He then went on to explain how this should be done through the Foreign Bureau which was the organ of the Communist Party of India abroad. This Bureau had three members, namely "the comrade in Paris" (Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi), Clemens Palme Dutt and Roy himself. The Bureau's functions included the publication of the *Masses of India* (Roy's paper which was finding its way into India in large quantities at that

time), the production of Marxist literature specially for India, and the education of Party members abroad. It was also to act as the organ through which the Communist International would guide the activities of its Indian section. The Bureau had been set up as the result of a resolution passed by the Communist Party of India in May 1927, but Roy was by no means satisfied with the security of its position and asked the Party to signify its assent to the state of affairs outlined above, "in order that all possibilities of misunderstanding and conflict will be eliminated for the future".

Financial Aid from Moscow. The last section of this highly interesting letter dealt with "the financial matter", a subject which will be discussed in somewhat greater detail in Chapter 16. "Arrangements have been made", Roy wrote, "to continue the aid for the three papers and also for the monthly in the north, if necessary. Besides, provision has also been made for the other necessities specified in a report received two months ago. . . . This is a temporary arrangement and things will be in a better shape in the New Year (i.e., 1928). . . . The new arrangement will be according to a plan which will be communicated to you in due time. Meanwhile, I may mention that the plan will include the publication by the W. P. P. of a series of small pamphlets dealing elementarily with the theoretical and organisational questions of working class politics."

The Calcutta Meeting of the Communist Party of India. When, therefore, the various members of the Communist Party met in Calcutta in December 1928 they had before them the outline of their future programme. A new central executive was first elected and the meeting then considered the various items on the agenda. The main decisions were to make the Party active and to do propaganda in the name of the C. P. I., to affiliate to the Communist International, to adopt the Colonial Thesis of the Comintern as the basis for work, and to send Muzaffar Ahmad to Moscow as a delegate to the Executive Committee of the Communist International. A revised constitution was subsequently issued which differed materially from the earlier one. It began by describing the Party as

a section of the Communist International and then categorically stated that the Party's object was "the attainment of socialism . . . in accordance with the programme of the Communist International and the policy adopted from time to time by the Party with the agreement of the Communist International." Roy's instructions had thus been obeyed to the letter. The Party's next meetings were held in Bombay on the 17th to the 19th March 1929 when Dr. G. M. Adhikari, as the expert in method, presented concrete proposals for further re-organisation which were accepted in theory. The Party was to be organised in five departments (for trades-unions, peasants, propaganda, organisational and secretariat development and political control), and a sub-committee was appointed to work out details. On the next day, the majority of the members were arrested and the programme could not be carried into effect.

Conclusions. The non-Marxian Communist Party of India, set up by Satya Bhakta in 1924 while the Cawnpore convicts were still in jail, had thus been transformed, step by step, into a body owing full allegiance to the Communist International. This gradual development was guided and closely supervised throughout by the Comintern itself, and the formal act of affiliation was the final step in the development of a conspiracy which had begun with the capture of the C. P. I. at the Cawnpore Conference in December 1925. But this part of the conspiracy was in itself less serious than the formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties which were expressly designed to throw dust in the eyes of the thinking public, and lest the word "Communist" should frighten people away. So long as the Communists remained in the background of these organisations, Moscow's purpose was fully served.

CHAPTER 15.

THE MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE.

Preliminaries. On the 20th March 1929, thirty-one of the most important leaders in India, including Spratt, Bradley, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani and Dange, were arrested in different parts of the country and charged with conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. Hutchinson was arrested a few weeks later and his name added to the list of those to be prosecuted. The charges made on behalf of the Crown were supported by a vast mass of documentary evidence, the like of which has probably never been handled in a single case in the whole history of Indian legal practice ; for the very comprehensive search operations which were simultaneously carried out prior to the institution of the case, had been productive of every conceivable form of concomitant to an open campaign backed by a secret organisation. Communist books and papers, leaflets and other literature, letters couched in cryptic terms or written in invisible ink, plans of campaign and codes and ciphers for use in communication with agencies in foreign lands, were amongst the documents seized and later exhibited before the courts.

A Summary of the Charges. The great authority which so " accurate and exact " (to use the High Court's phrase) a document as the judgement of the Court of Session gives to my pen has caused me to turn to it for much of the material on which the previous chapter was based, and I do not propose to go much further into the ramifications of this extremely involved case, which embraces a large variety of personalities and organisations, many of which have since ceased to be of importance. It is, in fact, my intention to do no more than give a résumé of the charges made by the Crown before three successive courts—one of preliminary inquiry, the other of Session and the third of Appeal—and of those courts' general findings and to follow this up by commenting as briefly as possible on three or four aspects of the

case which seem to be of more than ephemeral importance. My first object can best be achieved by quoting from the concluding lines of the findings of the lower Court, which finished its hearing of the case on the 14th January 1930 : " It has been definitely proved that (1) the Communist International was founded in 1919, with its headquarters at Moscow, as the supreme head of all Communist organisations throughout the world ; (2) its chief aim is to establish workers' republics in every country ; (3) for this purpose it has as its fixed policy the exciting of violent revolution in all countries ; (4) in particular, it has turned its attention to India and determined to cause a revolution which has for its immediate object the overthrow of the sovereignty of the King-Emperor in British India ; (5) with this object it has formed a conspiracy with persons and bodies in Europe and India and elsewhere to excite the Indian workers and peasants to revolution ; (6) these persons and bodies, whom I may call conspirators, have laid down a general plan of campaign under the direction of the Communist International ; (7) this plan includes the formation of such bodies as a Communist Party of India and Workers' and Peasants' Parties ; (8) the immediate work of these parties is to gain control of the working classes by organising them in unions, teaching them the principles of Communism, inciting them to strikes in order to educate them and teach them solidarity, and in every way to use every possible method of propaganda and instruction ; (9) the workers are thus to be taught mass organisation with a view to the declaration of a general strike followed by revolution ; (10) the peasants are to be organised in a similar manner so as to form an effective reserve force for the proletarian masses and to effect an agrarian revolution ; (11) in pursuance of these aims, a Communist Party of India and four Workers' and Peasants' Parties, in Bombay, Bengal, the Punjab and the United Provinces, were formed ; (12) these bodies were given financial aid from Moscow and their policy was dictated from Moscow, directly and via England and the Continent, through communications conducted in a secret and conspiratorial manner ; (13) in addition to this, several persons, such as Allison, Spratt and Bradley, were sent out to India for the express purpose of organising

the work and fomenting revolution; (14) in pursuance of these directions and with the financial help thus obtained, these bodies have organised unions, conducted demonstrations, edited papers, instituted youth movements, initiated and conducted strikes and used all possible methods of propaganda; (15) their express aim in all these activities has been to overthrow the sovereignty of the King in British India, with a view to the establishment of a socialist State under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the supreme command of the Communist International; (16) in these activities all the accused, with the exception of Dharamvir Singh, are shown to have taken part with full knowledge and approval of their aims and objects, and directly or indirectly in league with the conspirators outside India; (17) they have, therefore, formed part of the conspiracy to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India and are liable to be tried under section 121-A, I. P. C."

The Sentences. The Additional Sessions Judge, who took up the hearing of the case sixteen days later pronounced judgement on the 16th January 1933, sentencing all but four of the thirty-one accused persons to varying terms of transportation and rigorous imprisonment. One, D. R. Thengdi, had died some four months previously whilst on bail in Poona and three Bengalis were acquitted. Of the persons with whom this book is particularly concerned, Muzaffar Ahmad (of the Cawnpore conspiracy case) was sentenced to transportation for life, S. A. Dange (also convicted at Cawnpore in 1924), S. V. Ghate, K. N. Joglekar, R. S. Nimbkar and Phillip Spratt to twelve years' transportation, B. F. Bradley, S. S. Mirajkar and Shaukat Usmani (a third of the Cawnpore conspirators) to ten years' transportation, Abdul Majid and Sohan Singh Josh (Spratt's agents in the Punjab) and Dharani Goswami (who will make his appearance in Chapter 20) to seven years' transportation, and Dr. G. M. Adhikari and P. C. Joshi to five years' transportation; while Gopen Chakravarty (who also figures prominently in Chapter 20), Gopal Basak and Lester Hutchinson were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of four, and Shamsul Huda of three, years. Chapter 17 will show how Amir

Haidar Khan, an absconding accused in this case, was laid by the heels in Madras during 1932 and sentenced to an aggregate of thirty months' rigorous imprisonment.

The Scope of the Conspiracy. In the course of a judgement consisting of close on seven hundred printed foolscap pages, the Sessions Judge accepted the main conclusions of the lower Court and found that the Communist International in Russia aimed at bringing about a revolution or revolutions for the overthrow of existing governments by means of armed risings, and at the establishment of soviet republics in their place ; that India had been selected as a suitable field for their operations and as being one of the most likely places for the next step forward for the world revolution ; that the methods included the incitement of antagonism between capital and labour, the encouragement of strikes, *hartals* and similar demonstrations, and the creation and development of organisations, superficially for the benefit of their members, but in reality worked for the purpose of promoting the Communist programme ; and that the twenty-seven persons whom he later convicted had taken part, together with others not brought before his Court, in conspiracy which aimed at depriving the King of the sovereignty of British India.

Outside Assistance. On the subject of those who were not produced before him—and they included M. N. Roy, Khushi Muhammad (*alias* Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi), George Allison (*alias* Donald Campbell), J. F. Ryan (the Australian Communist), Clemens Palme Dutt, Shapurji Saklatvala, the late R. C. L. Sharma of Pondicherry and V. N. Chattopadhyaya amongst some fifty others—the Judge has written : “ I am quite satisfied that all these persons are linked in one way or another with this conspiracy along with many other persons whose names will be found scattered here and there through the record and through this judgement. These persons were all rightly described by the prosecution at an early stage in this case as co-conspirators, and there can be no doubt that the same description can very correctly be applied to the absconding accused, Amir Haidar Khan, and to the late D. R. Thengdi, accused, who has died during the period of five months which the writing of this judgement has taken.

In addition to these individuals there are also certain organisations, in regard to which it is proved, either that they have taken part in this conspiracy as organisations or that the persons who controlled them have used them for conspiratorial purposes. Such organisations are the Communist International and its affiliated bodies, the Krestintern or Peasants' International, the Red International of Labour Unions or R.I.L.U., the Communist Party of Great Britain, the National Minority Movement, the Workers' Welfare League of India, the Labour Research Department, the Young Communist League of Great Britain, the Indian Seamen's Union, the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat and, last but by no means least, the League Against Imperialism."

Revision on Appeal. All twenty-seven convicts duly appealed against their conviction and sentences to the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad, a bench of which took up the hearing of the case on the 24th July 1933. Judgement was delivered on the 3rd August by the Chief Justice who thus summed up the findings of the Court: "It cannot be too clearly stated that in this case the Government has not prosecuted anyone for his opinions. The gravamen of the charge—which as regards a large majority of the accused has been proved—is that they have endeavoured to put their opinions into practice; the inevitable result of their action is that the accused have brought themselves within the scope of section 121A of the Indian Penal Code. . . . It may be said that the object aimed at in the conspiracy was impracticable, one might even say impossible, of achievement. The steps taken by the accused till their arrest were in one sense utterly puerile and could not be conceived to lead to any such serious consequences as the accused dreamt of. But one reason why nothing substantial was done by the accused was the alertness and strict vigilance of the police, who were able to discover the conspiracy at an early stage and constantly watched the conduct of all the accused till their arrest. Even if there had been any chance of a partial success in rousing the peasants and workers, that was completely frustrated by the effective counteraction adopted by the highly efficient police. The detection of this conspiracy was a difficult matter, and it was very

creditable to the Criminal Investigation Department that, in spite of every attempt having been made by the accused to conceal their designs and to cover up their communications and correspondence, the police managed to find out practically everything that the accused did or that passed between them."

Then followed a homily on the particular gravity of seditious and inflammatory appeals at times of excitement, and the summary concluded with the words : " We must, therefore, take a serious view of the offence of conspiracy committed by the accused whom we find guilty." But taking into consideration the fact that all the accused had already undergone more than four years' confinement before their case came before him, the Chief Justice considerably scaled down the sentences passed in the Sessions Court. This clemency was accompanied, however, by an expression of opinion that if the present offenders proved incorrigible it might be necessary in the public interest to curtail their activities for lengthy periods. The result of the appeal was the immediate release of Hutchinson and eight other lesser conspirators (all of whom were acquitted and of whom it was written that they had themselves largely to thank for their prosecution, their seditious activities in association with Communists having created a natural suspicion that they were engaged in the conspiracy) and also of P. C. Joshi, Gopal Basak, Shamsul Huda and Dr. G. M. Adhikari whose sentences were reduced to the terms which they had already undergone. By the end of 1933, all save Spratt, Muzaffar Ahmad, S. A. Dange and Shaukat Usmani had also regained their liberty. Spratt was enlarged in September 1934, and with the release of the three incorrigibles in the autumn of 1935, the curtain will be rung down on the second Act of the Indian Communist drama, and the stage fully set for the third Act, for which rehearsals are now in progress. It is only to be hoped that this third Act, when it comes, will have a less tragic ending than its predecessor. It certainly promises to be more spectacular and to have a quicker tempo.

The Duration of the Trial. Charges of all kinds have been levelled against the authorities in India in connexion with the Meerut case, the protracted course

of which has also caused unfavourable comment in circles wholly unconnected with Communism but at the same time unfamiliar with Indian law. It may, therefore, serve a useful purpose to subject these charges to a brief examination. Before doing so, I will take leave to quote a short extract from a letter written by M. N. Roy shortly after the conclusion of the Cawnpore case in 1924. I do so because it throws light on the frame of mind in which Moscow's followers go (and, it is to be feared, always will go) to their trial: "The news about the result of the Cawnpore case", Roy wrote in November 1924, "reached us yesterday. We had not expected any better. Poor fellows! If they could only have put up a better defence, four years in jail would have been worth while. We must have better Communists than this lot; and the defending Councils (*sic*). By God what fools! . . . With a better lot in the dock and less stupid heads at the Bar, the Cawnpore case could have been made an epoch-making event in our political history." The Meerut prisoners have, it must be admitted, extracted (so far as foreign countries are concerned) more of advertisement and political capital from their trial than did their predecessors at Cawnpore, or, indeed, than Roy, himself arraigned at Cawnpore in 1931, was able to do. The voluminous discourses on Communist theory and principles (much of them irrelevant to the charges framed) which took the place of statements of defence were published in book form for sale in England or anywhere else where people could be found to read them. Jail conditions, which the accused themselves have many times applauded in their letters to their friends, inspired a continual stream of entirely misleading press articles, while the length of the case has always stood Communist editors in good stead.

It seems hardly necessary to quote extensively from that part of the High Court judgement which analysed the causes of delay. It will suffice to say that the blame was apportioned in the following words:—"Had there been greater discrimination in the choice and selection of evidence for the prosecution, a greater restraint by the accused in keeping their statements within the limits of relevancy, and a little more strictness on the part of the Court, the trial would not have taken such a long time."

Of the second of these causes the Chief Justice wrote: "The accused in their turn took an inordinately long time in reading out well prepared statements which the Court had to take down word for word. In most cases they were nothing more than an exposition, on an elaborate scale, of the doctrines of Communism, its tenets and its programme. There has been an extravagant waste of time and energy in the dictation and recording of these statements." It may also be remarked that the Sessions Judge had gone very deeply into this matter of delay and had come to the definite conclusion that "out of the period of three years and ten months during which the accused were under trial, a period of at least a year could certainly have been cut off had the accused not definitely laid themselves out to delay the case whenever they thought it safe to do so." There was further delay of over three months in the hearing of the appeal, which, too, was the result of the specific application of the appellants for postponement.

The Future. The proceedings were undoubtedly lengthy, but so have been similar cases elsewhere. The French and the practical Japanese, to quote only two instances, took two and three years, respectively, to dispose of cases of almost identical dimensions in circumstances which gave the accused no opportunities for self-advertisement. When to the masses of evidence adduced is added a consideration of the cumbrous nature of the Indian law, which, in its efforts to prevent injustice, places all the cards in the hands of the accused, and to this is superadded the determination of those accused to extract from the trial the maximum of advertisement for themselves and their doctrines, the length of time which it took to complete the hearing of the case becomes the less surprising. But the case has emphasized the need for speedier, less cumbersome, and less fettered methods of safeguarding India against those who advocate, or work for, armed rebellion in the interests of a foreign power. To allow such individuals freedom of speech and action up to a time when their activities amount to a conspiracy to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India, has been proved to be an expensive and dangerous policy.

The Indian Communist Programme. Enough has, I hope, been said to show the impossibility of legally

prosecuting the various parts of the programme of the Communist International in India. As Roy himself once pointed out in connexion with the Cawnpore case, "Government do not object to Communism as such, but *applied* Communism is not tolerable to them. It is no longer a dead theory. It invigorates the present political struggle by stimulating the consciousness and energy of the revolutionary social forces." The same realization is frequently to be found in the statements of the accused in the Meerut case and it may be of assistance to recapitulate, at this stage, the methods by which Indian Communists have sought (and are likely to seek in the future) to put into practice the instructions which Kuusinen adequately summarized in the words : " Modestly and yet perseveringly must we begin in India with the work in the trades-unions and, during strikes, with the education of the Party workers."* This authoritative dictum was, of course, supplemented, both before and after its pronouncement, by more detailed instructions (such as the Assembly Letter already referred to) dealing not only with trades-union work but also with operations amongst rural workers and the petty *bourgeoisie*. Many of these documents were produced by the Crown in support of the charges against the accused, and the Crown Counsel gave, in his summing up of the case, a list of the tasks and duties of Communists in India derived from an analysis of these exhibits. I reproduce the list as the Crown Counsel gave it. It indicates, as he suggested, some of the obvious items to be looked for in the public activities of the accused in consequence of injunctions made by the Communist International from time to time. " Concentrate on organisation ; take part in the everyday struggle ; do not disregard the smallest demand ; draw attention to abuses and help to formulate demands ; be conspicuous in all strikes and demonstrations ; every strike, large or small, is a lesson ; train leaders from the rank and file ; inculcate discipline ; expose reformists ; oppose all phrases about non-violence or passive resistance ; deprecate tactfully the influence of religion ; denounce capitalists ; explain that Government always helps capitalists ; that it is, in fact, a

*Report on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies presented to the VI Congress of the Communist International.

capitalist Government ; therefore, denounce Government ; introduce political subjects and issues ; emphasize that no lasting betterment is possible under the capitalist system ; stress, therefore, the necessity of revolution and the establishment of a workers' *raj* ; create discontent and intensify it where it exists ; demonstrate the international character of the class struggle ; praise R.I.L.U. and denounce Amsterdam ; draw illustrations from Russia and China." The Sessions Judge took this able analysis as the basis of his examination and classification of the activities of the accused and found that all the items mentioned were covered either by the evidence on the record or by the admissions made in the statements of the accused.

Other Items in the Programme. To the above summary of the general and industrial programme there should, perhaps, be added a short quotation which seems generally, though adequately, to cover the agrarian and petty *bourgeois* sides of this question. Coming to the colonial and semi-colonial countries (China, India, etc.), the Communist International lays it down* that "the principal task in such countries is, on the one hand, to fight against feudalism and the pro-capitalist forms of exploitation and systematically to develop the peasant agrarian revolution ; on the other hand, to fight against foreign imperialism for national independence. As a rule, transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in these countries will be possible only through a series of preparatory stages and as the outcome of the whole period of transformation of *bourgeois* democratic revolution into socialist revolution." Tampering with the loyalty of the troops comes at a more mature stage in the proceedings, a stage which those with whom we are now concerned had fortunately not reached when the Meerut case began. We can, therefore, leave this aspect of the case out of the reckoning for the moment.

Violent Methods of Revolution. Another question which the Meerut case has effectively answered is one which is often asked : "Is Indian Communism based on violence ?" Earlier chapters have demonstrated how the revolution which the Communist International seeks to bring about is what Philip Spratt once described as a

* At page 40 of the Programme of the Communist International.

“ violent upheaval of a political and military character—revolution in the good old-fashioned sense.” To the authorities already quoted I need only add a few sentences, culled at random from the pages of the exhibits in the Meerut case, in order to show that the members of the Communist Party of India are under no delusion as to the nature of the movement which they strive to promote. Thus, Spratt said in a speech which he delivered at a young men’s conference in Malda in Bengal : “ We need not be careful to disguise the brutal, blood-thirsty side of our proposal. We say these things are inevitable.” Dange, in Bombay, put the matter in a nutshell—“ Communism is this ; if the State is based on violence it cannot be overthrown but by violence.” In the north, P. C. Joshi wrote : “ Any serious and uncompromising movement for liberation ought to provide and prepare for these successive stages—mass demonstrations and non-violent disciplined direct mass action and, finally, armed mass rising.” So, too, Sohan Singh Josh, wrote in the Lahore *Kirti* : “ Yes, if preparations are made, the programme of violence can then be laid before the country.” And V. N. Chattopadhyaya in a letter from Moscow to Jawaharlal Nehru said : “ But I hope that this time there will be no sentimental nonsense about the shedding of a few litres of blood, and that the revolutionary movement will be led on purely materialistic lines by trained Marxian revolutionaries.” These are a few of the numberless references to this subject to be found in the documents exhibited at Meerut, and, the accused testified one after another in their individual statements to the Court to the fact that they still adhered to this view. It is unnecessary to quote extracts therefrom, for R. S. Nimbkar submitted to the Court an additional statement on behalf of himself and seventeen others which conclusively disposed of the matter in the following words : “ The immediate objective towards which the party of the proletariat has to work is the general strike of workers, supported by a general no-tax and no-rent campaign, which will as it develops lead to an armed revolution. . . . Any proposal to achieve the revolution or maintain its gains without the use of force is in our view an absurdity.”

Violence an Immediate Objective. This passage also disposes of one line of defence which Counsel for

some of the prisoners felt it their duty to make. On this subject the High Court judgement reads : " The contention of the learned advocate for the appellants that such an objective is a distant aim to be realized in the unknown far-off future cannot be accepted for a moment. No doubt the Communists would, as a tactical measure, begin with the preliminary stages in the first instance, but whenever conditions became favourable they would adapt themselves to those conditions and resort to armed revolution, if necessary. . . . The question is entirely one of opportunity and the opportunity has to be seized and not lost sight of as soon as it occurs."

It is mainly to the readers of this book that India must look for salvation from " the opportunity ".

CHAPTER 16.

FOREIGN DIRECTION AND ASSISTANCE.

The Conspiracy Abroad. There is one other aspect of Indian Communism into which the courts at Meerut delved very deeply and which is of such importance (no less now than then) that it seems to merit examination in a separate chapter before passing on to the history of more recent times. Incidental reference has already been made in the last few chapters to instructions from abroad, to the "financial matter", to cryptic letters and the like; and a somewhat fuller account has been given of the workings of the Foreign Bureau. It is now my purpose to present a brief connected sketch of the organisation in Europe for carrying out the designs of the Third International in India and of the various ways in which this organisation furthered the movement and maintained connexion with its confederates across the seas. It is natural to look to Meerut for material about such matters, not only because of the authority which is derived therefrom but also because much of the evidence on this particular subject was produced by witnesses from Scotland Yard and is not available elsewhere. When, therefore, a fact is said in the next few pages to have been proved, it should be taken to mean that it was proved by satisfactory evidence in the Court of Session at Meerut and that the proof was not controverted in the appeal before the High Court in Allahabad.

The Colonial Bureau of the C. P. G. B. It was resolved at the fifth World Congress of the Communist International in 1924 to pay special attention to the colonies and to intensify Communist activities therein. The Communist Party of Great Britain already had a Colonial Bureau, but there was no co-ordinated plan of work. There were also on the Continent several Indians who preferred not to return to India, amongst them being M. N. Roy, Khushi Muhammad, *alias* Sepassi, and Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya. Roy was in direct touch with the Comintern in Moscow and also corresponded direct with

India. He worked as far as possible in co-operation with the Colonial Bureau of the C. P. G. B., but was not, it appears, subordinate to them - nor, on the other hand, were they bound to take his advice.

Roy's Relations with the Colonial Bureau. The fifth World Congress had also determined that the Communist Party in each imperialist country should become responsible for the direction of the movement in its colonies. "This", said Roy, "smacks of imperialism", but, whether Roy relished it or not, the orders of the Comintern had to be carried out, and a good deal of friction resulted. From then onwards, the work proceeded in London in conjunction with a group of Indian residents in England, not necessarily Communists but most of them very much inclined that way. Agitation was carried on amongst Indian seamen and considerable attention was devoted to Indian students at the Universities, a subject which is more fully referred to in Chapter 20. The C. P. G. B. had taken entire control of the movement in India and had, it will be remembered, dispatched Percy Glading to that country to make a preliminary survey of the situation. This did not, of course, suit Roy, who thought that, as an Indian long in close touch with Moscow, he was entitled to very much more consideration and trust than he was receiving.

The Amsterdam Conference and After. Eventually a meeting was held in Amsterdam in July 1925 between certain members of the Communist Parties of Holland and Great Britain and of the Indian groups both in England and on the Continent. Friction arose, not only between Roy and the C. P. G. B. but also between members of the Indian groups themselves. The most important point discussed was the question of control by the C. P. G. B., and this was eventually left for decision by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. The orders of the Comintern were communicated to the C. P. G. B. four months later and were summarized in a letter which Roy sent simultaneously to the Indian group in London: "The Indian Communist group in Britain will, therefore, carry on the programme outlined in your letter in conjunction with the Colonial Commission of the C. P. G. B. It will be politically guided by the European

Bureau of the C. P. of India as well as the Colonial Commission of the C. P. G. B." The European Bureau (which later became the Foreign Bureau already referred to) was to be composed of "the comrades on the Continent", and Roy thus regained his former standing in the political guidance of the movement in India. A little later the Comintern's original decision was reasserted, in so far as India was concerned, in the following terms: "Until we can legalize ourselves in India, the centre of our work, must be in England for technical as well as political reasons." The same letter also emphasized the need for the creation of a special cadre for colonial work in imperialist countries. Some of the best members, it was said, should be given to this cadre. Allison, Spratt and Bradley were dispatched to India in the course of the next two years, and the two last-named, at any rate, amply justified the trust reposed in them.

The Foreign Bureau. Aided by the fact that C. P. Dutt was a member of both bodies, the Foreign and Colonial Bureaux worked in perfect harmony after the Amsterdam meeting. The functions of the former organisation, as visualized by M. N. Roy, have already been detailed in an earlier chapter, but it should here be mentioned that it was through the fact of this Bureau's affiliation to the Communist International that the latter body was able to exercise authoritative control over the movement in India. It would take more time and space than is reasonable in a volume of this kind to examine the very large number of documents which were proved against the Bureau's three members.* There were amongst them fifty or more letters (of which the Assembly Letter was typical) written to India advising and instructing, sometimes in the minutest detail, those at work there on every conceivable subject connected with their work. To quote only a few instances, there were the questions of the Party's relations with Spratt and Allison and with the Indian National Congress; how it should conduct its underground operations; how it should receive and circulate propaganda from abroad; where and how its own propaganda should be printed.

* M. N. Roy, C. P. Dutt and Sepassi.

On special occasions actual drafts were sent of manifestoes, constitutions and resolutions to be accepted and passed by the Central Committee. The Party was also informed that it had been made obligatory for certain Communist papers in England to publish copy sent to them from India ; and another letter in this series dealt at some length with such a minor organisational detail as the location of the Party's headquarters. Hoy and his colleagues in the Foreign Bureau were certainly not idle in the interval between the Amsterdam conference and the institution of the Meerut case. '

Methods of Transmission. It is one thing, however, to have a complete organisation in Europe for controlling the work in India and another to establish effective contact with the bodies concerned. It was not that these bodies were unwilling to accept control, but there were difficulties in the way of building up permanent lines of communication. The police were vigilant and any literature deemed to be subversive was seized and many letters were intercepted in the post and detained. Consequently, the question of communications was one which occupied a good deal of attention on both sides of the water. The difficulty was met in various ways. One was to send communications through the medium of seamen, amongst whom work was being done in London, and the minutes of a joint meeting of members of the Colonial Bureau and the India group in London in October 1925 made it clear that British seamen were, if anything, to be preferred to Indians. Sepassi's contacts in Marseilles were particularly useful in this connexion and it was he who suggested the establishment of an agency in Colombo to receive letters and literature from vessels bound for the Far East. This suggestion was later reinforced by a resolution passed by the Red International of Labour Unions demanding the immediate strengthening of international connexions " by organizing exchange of literature through couriers and seamen, etc., between India and England, India and China, Japan, etc." A letter from Germany found with Amir Haidar Khan gave very detailed instructions for communication by this means between Indian ports and Hamburg. Another means of securing the safe delivery of letters was the use of cover addresses. In December 1926 Sepassi provided some in Paris and

in July 1927 C. P. Dutt suggested some in England, and there were frequent references in the documents exhibited at Meerut to similar addresses in use in India as well as requests for new ones, both in Europe and India, to replace those which no longer held good. There was, moreover, more than a suggestion in a cipher letter which Spratt sent to C. P. Dutt in August 1927 that communications occasionally travelled overland via Afghanistan and the Punjab. "Actual sending is extremely difficult", Spratt wrote, "and each time someone has had to travel from Lahore." (The true significance of the word "sending" will be apparent in a moment.) Such a route has obvious advantages, for all the delay which its use involves, and it has been shown that it was successfully exploited on more than one occasion for the dispatch of funds.

The Pondicherry-Madras Post Office. Lastly, mention must be made of a system of post boxes which was operating at the other end of India. In Pondicherry there was the late Ram Charan Lal Sharma, who fled to this French settlement in 1920 in order to avoid arrest. For several years thereafter (almost up to the time of his death in 1931) he acted as Roy's main channel of communication with India. He is known to have handled, in the course of duties in this connexion, letters, propaganda material and funds amounting to several hundred pounds sterling. He also offered to assist in the smuggling of arms. His name was one of the eight included in the plaint lodged at Cawnpore in 1924, but the difficulty of obtaining orders of extradition prevented his being brought before the Court. At the Madras end from 1926 onwards was a man of the name of C. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, with three or more fictitious names and several cover addresses, who received and forwarded a considerable part of the correspondence between the Foreign Bureau and India. Sixteen letters were proved to have passed through this channel from one side or the other, amongst them being four from Sepassi from Paris and two from Spratt to C. P. Dutt, but this figure represents only a small fraction of the total traffic. Pondicherry was also an important medium for the importation of Communist literature from abroad, and Roy suggested on one occasion that this would be a suitable route for the dispatch of a new batch of students to

Moscow and asked Muzaffar Ahmad to "consult with the comrade at Pondicherry about the particulars of the matter"

Secret Writing. Communications sent by the methods described above were obviously difficult to intercept, and it is not surprising, when the various services reached the pitch of organization which they had by the end of 1928, that most of what was sent reached its destination. But the safety of communications was further assured by yet other means. These included the use of a figure cipher, invisible ink, cryptic language and a simple transposition code which would be quickly intelligible to the recipient but might keep the authorities in doubt for some time should messages in which it was employed happen to fall into their hands. The figure cipher was based on Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, and seems to have been used only by the heads of the Indian organisation, Fazl Elahi, Spratt and Bradley, and the group in Europe. The cryptic writing took the form of a sort of grotesque correspondence as if between clergymen in which the members of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties were "Methodists" and the "Y. M. C. A." meant the Communist Party of India and so forth. All the leading participators in the movement had been given pseudonyms; Allison was "David", Spratt was "Desmond", Bradley "Fred", C. P. Dutt "Douglas" or "J", etc. It was "Douglas" who was the most frequent sender and recipient of this kind of letter and, of twenty letters proved to have been written by him, nearly half were of the type which began "Dear Brother in God". On the Indian side, Spratt was the most constant user of this form of expression and it was probably he who devised the scheme by which such words as "send" and "receive" were interchanged. Thus, in a letter dated the 14th June 1927, the message, "You should receive some sort of MSS by the end of August. Ask Baker about it. It should not be sent directly by me or Ambrose" really means, "You should *send* some *money* by the end of August. Ask *Saklatvala* about it. It should not be *received* directly by me or *Muzaffar Ahmad*." It is unnecessary to multiply instances, and I pass on, therefore, to the transposition code, which was used, mainly in India itself, to disguise the names of

persons and places. The principle of this code was that in writing a name all the vowels in it were substituted by those which next precede them in the alphabet (U for A, A for E, etc.). Similar order was then taken with the first and last consonants in the name. Thus, "Cunfa" equalled Dange, "Lujec" Majid, "Fhusa" Ghate, and so on. If these principles were not always rigidly applied, it was due to individual vagaries.

Financial Aid from Abroad. The help which Moscow gave to the Indian movement through its European agencies did not, however, stop at instructions and advice. Every organisation needs funds; and the Comintern had long since realized that the party in India was not in a position to provide for itself. Spratt was constantly complaining of the inadequacy of resources and on one occasion he drew up a sort of budget which estimated the needs of the Indian organisation at the modest sum of Rs. 2,400 a month. He appeared to suggest that this would mean an increase of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per centum on the then allowances, which were, therefore, presumably in the neighbourhood of Rs. 1,800 per mensem. Although there was frequent mention in the correspondence exhibited at Meerut of the dispatch of money from abroad, the Prosecution were able to prove the specific receipt only of a few sums. The Sessions Judge wrote as follows on this subject:—"I have not the smallest doubt that in all this correspondence, under the screen of "MSS", "words", "space" and the like, there are concealed references to financial arrangements and the sending and receiving money for the purposes of Communist work in India, that is for the purpose of furthering a Communist conspiracy; and I do not think that there can be any doubt, in the light of all these references, that a good deal of money was coming quite regularly, which never came to the notice of the authorities and of which, therefore, these cryptic references are the only evidence."

Moscow, the Probable Source. As the various Communist organisations in England which were concerned with the Indian movement seemed often to be in a state of impecuniosity, it seems fairly safe to assume that the original source of supply was Moscow.

I feel, however, that I should support this assumption by at least one illustration. In August 1925, the suggestion came from Moscow that C. P. Dutt should be sent to India as the representative of the Colonial Bureau of the C. P. G. B. The reply went back from London that the C. P. G. B. had barely enough money to pay Dutt's fare, whereupon Roy wrote that he had been instructed to go ahead with the matter, that Dutt was being sent on behalf of the Eastern Department of the Comintern, and that his deputation would not involve the British Party in any expenditure. These facts may be allowed to speak for themselves and this instance will, perhaps, suffice.

Some Remittances from London. I have said that the actual receipt of a few sums had been traced, and it will be interesting to make a cursory examination of some of the more important of these cases. Spratt was proved to have received the equivalent of £1,030 during the eighteen months which ended on the 30th June 1928. Of this, three sums, totalling £700, were dispatched from London by Samuel Montagu and Co., Olive N. Parsons and Douglas Parsons. Olive Parsons is the wife of Douglas Parsons and her father is a director of Samuel Montagu and Co. Douglas Parsons is a noted British Communist and was at one time the general manager of the Communist organ, the *Sunday Worker*. Spratt also received £200 (and Bradley £100) from H. P. Rathbone and £40 from Robin Page Arnot, this latter remittance being "for representative Manchester Conference", while Bradley's £100 was "towards sending delegate". Both Rathbone and Page Arnot are prominent members of the C. P. G. B., and the cryptic references appear to be to the proposed dispatch of an Indian delegation to the sixth World Congress of the Communist International which was held in Moscow shortly afterwards. In addition to this £100, Bradley was proved to have received six other remittances amounting to about £300 in the course of a year and was in the habit of acknowledging the receipt of such funds to the Workers' Welfare League of India, a proven subsidiary of the C. P. G. B. The inference in all these cases is obvious; and I have already remarked upon the chronic impecuniosity of the various Communist organisations in England.

Donations from "Russian Workers" There was yet another method of sending funds to India about which there was no secrecy whatsoever ; indeed, Indian Communists were enjoined to give the receipt of these remittances the widest possible publicity and to emphasize the source from which they came. Examples of this method of dispatch are two sums—of Rs. 20,917 and Rs. 14,101—which were sent during the Bombay strikes to S. H. Jhabwala, in the capacity, first, of vice-president of the local Textile Labour Union and, later, of president of the Bombay Millworkers' Union. Both these donations were made ostensibly by the Textile Central Committee in Moscow, a professedly trades-unionist organisation, "for the relief of the strikers", but the first consignment was wrongly directed and, to the great consternation of the leaders of the Workers' and Peasants' Party (who avowed that it was intended for them and them alone), it fell into the hands of Mr. N. M. Joshi, the genuine trades-union leader. It was the contention of the accused at Meerut that these sums were sent purely out of the desire of the workers in Russia to help their fellow workers in India when they were in trouble, and the Defence Counsel tendered a pamphlet entitled "Red Money" in support of this theory. This pamphlet contained a statement of the facts relating to the money raised in Russia during the General Strike in Great Britain in 1926. It had been compiled by the All-Russian Council of Trades-Unions and copies had found their way to India.

Bradley had previously described the General Strike as an attempt at revolution which was frustrated owing to the treachery of some of the leaders, and the Prosecution were, as a matter of fact, able to make greater use of the pamphlet than the Defence. The body of the pamphlet ended with an interesting passage which took away much of the force from the Defence contention : "The movement in aid of the British workers was a mass movement. All the toilers of the U. S. S. R. were involved in it. It was an elemental product of the revolutionary activity and the highly developed class solidarity of the Russian workers, inured to struggle and nurtured in the spirit of true internationalism." The conclusion to be derived from this passage is well supported by an

examination of the resolutions printed as an appendix which showed convincingly that the motive for sending the money was political. For example, the workers in a factory in Leningrad were stated to have said, "We urge the British workers to transform the strike which has now begun into a political strike, and to conduct it to a victorious end, marshalling themselves for this purpose under the banner of the Communist Party of Great Britain." The Meerut Sessions Court remarked on this subject : "Another inference which Crown Counsel, as I think rightly, asked the Court to draw is that persons in possession of this pamphlet, and particularly people who had studied Communist literature and were, therefore, acquainted with Lenin's book, *Left Wing Communism*, must necessarily realize that all financial contributions from Russia, however they might be described, were sent for the specific purpose of fomenting revolution in India, and that, however the senders might be described, the real and actual senders were the Communists who are admittedly in control of all the leading trades-union organisations in Russia." It is for much the same reasons that "relief" from Communists or Communist bodies in England must be regarded with grave suspicion. I make no apology for having gone at some length into this question of financial aid from abroad ; it is one which will always be of importance when India is visited by industrial trouble.

Conclusions. It is unnecessary to refer again to the last form of assistance from abroad—the dispatch of foreign-trained expert advisers—except just to mention the name of Fazl Elahi who was sent to India at the end of 1926 ; George Allison's arrest seems so to have unnerved Elahi that he accomplished little or nothing up to the time of his own arrest and prosecution on the 5th April 1927. The arrival of each of these "experts" was duly announced to the Party in India beforehand by means of the cryptic correspondence already described. It only remains, therefore, to state the conclusions inevitably to be drawn from all that has been written in this and the foregoing chapter. Before committing the accused for trial by the Court of Session, Mr. Milner White, the Additional District Magistrate at Meerut summed the position up most

succinctly. " I have tried to show from the evidence " he wrote, " the aims of the Communist International and the various ways in which it tried to achieve them. The Workers' and Peasants' Parties were, after all, only the creations of the Communist Party of India, which, in its turn, is only a section of the Comintern. Though the work is to be executed in India, the policy is dictated from Russia ; and a direct connexion has been traced between the councils of ' the mightiest world organisation ' in the Winter Palace at Moscow and the hawkers of pamphlets in a tent at a bathing fair on the banks of the Ganges. And this is not only a theoretical connexion, but an intensely real and practical one. The Comintern not only laid down the policy but chose the instruments through which it was to be carried out, received their reports, considered their difficulties, corrected their deviations, and applauded their successes. That the work was illegal was fully recognized, and that is why it was necessary to use secret means of communication. By all definitions of the word, the whole scheme was a conspiracy and an agreement to perform an obviously illegal act. The scale was imposing, the conception grandiose ; but none the less it was a conspiracy, and those who took part in it cannot but be held liable under the conspiracy sections of the Indian Penal Code."

Much later, when the case had been concluded in the Court of Session, a high official of the Government of India wrote that, " it is satisfactory that, by this decision, a conspiracy fraught with the gravest dangers to the well-being of India has been stopped at an early stage ; it is even more important that it has been held that these activities, which might be regarded by some as harmless or even beneficial, have been revealed in their true light as an attempt to overthrow by revolutionary methods the Government established by law in India." It will be recalled that the subsequent judgement in appeal in no way diminished the emphasis which the two lower courts laid on the seriousness of the conspiracy, and if this is borne in mind and the views quoted above begin to find general acceptance in India and elsewhere in the colonial East, the Meerut case will not have been in vain.

CHAPTER 17.

THE PERIOD OF DEGENERATION.

A Blow at Communism. If further justification is required for the institution of what was to prove an extremely wearisome and protracted criminal case, it is to be found in the fact that the removal of the thirty leading Communist agitators from the political arena was immediately followed by a marked improvement in the industrial situation. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the arrests and searches which led up to the Meerut conspiracy case placed the authorities in a commanding position and created a vacuum in the leadership of the movement which was filled by very inferior material. Those whom force of circumstances pressed to the top were possessed of an organisational capacity, an honesty of purpose, and a mental calibre very much below that with which most of the Meerut prisoners were endowed. There were many to claim that the mantle of Spratt had fallen upon them, but none whom it fitted or became. In the face of the rivalries and petty squabbings which this state of affairs brought about, and in spite of exhortations from Moscow itself to establish an "Indian Soviet Republic" and to organise for the "approaching gigantic revolutionary fights", the Communist Party of India (or, it would be more correct to say, the various Communist organisations in India which Spratt had temporarily welded together) have not as yet been able to recover even a tithe of the power and prestige which belonged to the followers of Moscow's doctrines prior to March 1929. It was some time, indeed, before those who were left behind did anything at all towards rebuilding the system which had been the result of months of unremitting toil by capable and experienced workers, and which had been shattered by the seizure of all the important records prior to the Meerut case. Had merely the leaders been removed and the system remained intact, the Party might still have done much harm. As things turned out, a prominent Calcutta Communist was forced to admit that

“ from June 1929 to October 1929 the time was very bad with us ”. In actual fact, the only practical event of any importance during the last nine months of 1929 was a short-lived strike in the Bombay textile mills which the *Girni Kamgar Union* brought about at the end of April.

A Peaceful Year. The institution of the Meerut case was followed, therefore, by a spell of comparative freedom from both constructive reorganisation of Communist institutions and destructive meddling in labour affairs, and a period of industrial peace prevailed which seemed the greater by contrast with the serious unrest which had gone before. The passage of the Trades' Disputes Act through the Assembly served as something of a deterrent to those who sought to exploit industrial disputes, and the Public Safety Ordinance (while it lasted) gave pause to Moscow seriously to consider the expediency of sending foreign agents to India to take the places of Spratt and Bradley. Moreover, the inevitable revelations of police methods of counter-attack, which were made in the course of evidence in open court at Meerut, showed Communists in India and abroad that their system of communication with each other needed some modification. These problems and others attendant on them needed serious thought and study by leading Communists, and to the various impediments to successful reorganisation mentioned above there was added another—the lack of outside direction.

The Nagpur Congress and After. Towards the close of 1929, however, the first signs of a possible recrudescence of Communist activity were noticed. The shadow of Meerut had by this time grown less opaque; the Public Safety Ordinance had been withdrawn in response to so-called “ popular ” clamour; and closer acquaintance with the Trades' Disputes Act had shown that it was less fearsome in operation than from its form appeared. At the annual session of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, held at Nagpur in December 1929, therefore, speeches were made and resolutions passed which made it very clear that Communism was still a living force in India. The Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat, the Workers' Welfare League of India, and the League Against Imperialism—all three Communist

organisations—made further bids for the allegiance of the Congress, and the two latter were in some measure successful. Though the Congress was sharply divided on the question of Communism, enough was said there to show that the harvest sown by Spratt and his colleagues at Jharia a year earlier was ripening, and that this professedly trades-unionist body was rapidly and surely passing under the control of Moscow. The formation of most of the saner elements into a rival organisation, known as the Trades-Union Federation, gave a still freer hand to the Communist element. Encouraged by all this, the Communist Party of India again began to rear its head, under the guidance mainly of S. V. Deshpande and Mrs. Suhasini Nambiar in Bombay and Abdul Halim in Calcutta. Early in February 1930, there began a wide spread strike on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. There is no evidence that the Communists were directly responsible for this strike, but they undoubtedly encouraged it and spared no pains to foster the spirit of unrest which it called forth. Shortly afterwards, a serious riot occurred in Calcutta, as a direct result of Communist incitement of the local bullock-cart drivers against new legislation which affected them. This was later acclaimed by the official Communist press as the first "barriade street fight with the police in India"—which indeed it was.

Civil Disobedience as Moscow's Opportunity.

Though Moscow's attitude towards Mr. Gandhi and the Congress has latterly been one of unrelenting and continuous hostility, there is no doubt that Communists, both in India and abroad, watched the first civil disobedience movement with constant interest in order that they might usurp control of the resultant situation so soon as it had sufficiently matured to meet their ends. It is very much of a moot point whether they could ever have done so with the limited resources at their disposal, but the fact remains that their programme in 1930 was to conduct intensive propaganda amongst the peasants, the transport and metal workers and the troops ; to form, arm and train bodies of young workers to resist the attacks of the police and to destroy capitalist buildings when the opportunity arose ; and to win over to their

side the existing youth organisations in the country. This programme was to be carried out in preparation for the day when the situation which the Congress was creating should pass beyond Mr. Gandhi's control, as it had done once before in 1922. It would then be the duty of the Indian Communists to see that the revolutionary heat engendered did not subside; it must be increased and used for other purposes. It is not without significance that in three outstanding cases in which the civil disobedience movement brought serious disorders in its train—in Sholapur, in Kishoreganj and in Buldana—no trace of Communist complicity was discernible. In each case, however, Moscow's official propagandists, misled possibly by advices from Indian Communists, claimed the riots which occurred as a success on the part of the Communist Party of India.

S. V. Deshpande's Downfall. As time went by, the Communists in India seemed to be growing more and more impotent. Many of the leaders (including S. V. Deshpande and Abdul Halim) served short terms of imprisonment on one charge or another and, on return, showed a marked inclination to keep within the law and to do no more than was necessary to retain their nominal leadership. Of Halim it was written by a member of his party that, "none knows why he does not work hard for his principles and in the masses; when he is asked to work he replies that he has no funds." By the end of 1930, Deshpande had drifted from a proposal to start an "All-India Communist Party" to the formation of an Indian branch of the League Against Imperialism and a Marxian Students' Club, none of which ventures proved a success. His papers, the *Workers' Weekly* and the *Kranti*, both published along with numerous pamphlets in Bombay, contained more of vague fulminations than of tangible revolutionary schemes. As secretary of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, the Communist wing of the original organisation of that name which had split at Nagpur in 1929, he incurred considerable unpopularity by his decision not to hold the annual session in Bombay in February 1931 as had been arranged. It was eventually held in Calcutta in the following July and the proceedings confirmed Deshpande's worst fears

that he might be thrown out of power. The Congress broke up in disorder; Deshpande's party left the meeting; and each side thereafter claimed to be the All-India Trades Union Congress and elected its own office-bearers.* This disorderly session came as a suitable climax to all the disruptive tendencies which had been at work since March 1929 and which had split the Communist movement in India into numerous small units, each at slight variance with the other and many claiming direct descent from the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party and direct relations with the Communist International. (It will serve no useful purpose to give the names of even a few of the most important, for the groupings changed with such rapidity that names meant little or nothing.) Which, if any, was entitled to the latter claim, it is difficult to say. The probability is that the Comintern, wise by past experience, welcomed all but bound itself to none; for there is no doubt that Moscow still hopes to be able to provide the cohesive influence which will again mould many of these warring groups into one dangerous and formidable entity.

M. N. Roy's Reappearance. Chief amongst the rival parties was one sponsored by M. N. Roy, whose reappearance on the scene Moscow can hardly have welcomed. Chapter 13 spoke of the wane of Roy's influence at headquarters, and it will be convenient here to summarize his history in the years which immediately followed his fall from grace. After his removal from the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1928, as a result of frequent quarrels with Zinoviev, and his subsequent expulsion from membership of the International in 1929, Roy determined that he would build up a party of his own which would attempt to capture the Indian Communist movement and enable him to make his own terms with the Moscow leaders. His first move in this endeavour was to join the Brandler-Thalheimer Communist Opposition Group in Germany, a party of no great influence either in numbers or wealth, but of sufficient importance to give him at least an official standing. Rallying round him in Berlin a few Indian

* Deshpande's group has subsequently come to be known as the "Red" A. I. T. U. C.

enthusiasts in an abortive attempt to start a Berlin branch of the Indian National Congress, he sent two of them, Tayab Ali Shaikh and Sundar Kabadi, to India in the summer of 1930 as his advance agents. They took with them a manifesto addressed to the "Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India", in which Roy made clear his disagreement with the policy of the "official" Communist Party, which, in his view, had been drifting further and further away from the ideals of Lenin. "While rejecting the discredited road of formal parliamentary democracy," a part of it ran, "the Communist Party cannot advocate that India will immediately be a Soviet Republic. That will be running after a Utopia. The Soviet State is the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The conditions in India are not at all ripe for such a State. The revolutionary State must be based upon all the oppressed and exploited classes. . . . The task of the pioneer group is to get in touch with all concerned with the interests of the toiling masses and with those sympathetic to Communism. The workers becoming class-conscious cannot be expected to join the Communist party if it is organised only with a maximum programme which appears to have little relation to prevailing conditions. They must be shown that the solution of the problems actually before them, concerning the minimum demands of the toiling masses, come within the purview of the Communist party. There is no other way to free an essentially revolutionary movement for national independence from leadership of the *bourgeoisie*. . . . In India the way to Communism lies through the national revolution. . . . To this end it (the Communist party) must work through the national mass organisations—the National Congress, Youth Leagues, students' organisations and volunteer corps." Roy was right, but it was no mere coincidence that the Meerut accused invariably referred to "our ex-comrade Roy" from then onwards.

The Reception of Roy's Doctrines. The dissemination in India of propaganda on these lines by Roy's agents very quickly had its effect on a movement which had by no means recovered from the effects of the Meerut case, and, in an incredibly short space of time, Roy's two lieutenants advanced by a series of bounds

from one vantage point to another, from the Congress in Bombay through the Youth League to the *Girni Kamgar* Union, which they captured early in 1931 to the extreme discomfiture of S. V. Deshpande, the head of the "official" Communist Party, whose preserve it had been thitherto. Deshpande's position was still further embarrassed by the surreptitious arrival in December 1930 of M. N. Roy himself, travelling from Germany on a stolen passport. Working from behind the scenes, he succeeded in circulating an amazing amount of literature, including his new organ, the *Masses*, the counterpart of his earlier production, *The Masses of India*, which figured in the Assembly Letter. A new programme issued by Roy differed but little from his earlier pronouncements with the important exception that it was couched in somewhat more moderate terms, its phraseology being such as to frighten neither constitutional trades-unionists nor those advocates of peasant reform who hold the methods of Moscow in abhorrence. In the field of trades-unionism Roy encountered not inconsiderable difficulties. There was no longer the same inflammable material to hand as had existed at an earlier period, and what there was of a trades-union movement in India was in moderate hands, while the workers as a whole had learnt by bitter experience to view the intentions of newcomers with considerable suspicion. Roy, however, was no shirker and there is no doubt that he set his hand most energetically to the performance of that part of his task which centred in the combination and penetration of the most virile trades-union organisations.

Introspective Criticism. An appreciation of the situation by M. N. Roy which appeared in *Gegen den Strom*, the organ of the German Communist Opposition, on the 14th February 1931 is of interest—the more so because it is a shrewd appreciation of things as they really were. In the course of his article Roy said that, despite the claims of the Communist International, very little progress had been made with the organisation of a Communist Party of India. The ultra-left tactics which had been employed during the past two years had destroyed many of the mass organisations which had been built up under Communist leadership. The

Girni Kamgar Union's membership had fallen from 80,000 to 1,000 ; other trades-unions were in similar case. The " official " communists were as generals without an army ; by faulty leadership they had thoroughly disorganised and demoralized such following as had been theirs. He had, therefore, considered it his duty to issue a manifesto setting forth a platform. He did not propose the organisation of a second Communist party independent of the Communist International, as he believed that the Communist Party of India must be a section of the Communist International ; but such a party could never be built up as a mass organisation unless it abandoned the false line of action recommended by Zinoviev and adopted by the present Communist International. In reporting to the German Communist Opposition leaders Roy stated that the " official " Communist Party counted for nothing in India and did not exist outside Bombay and Calcutta. It was composed of students and was more in the nature of a study group. In only one union of railwaymen had it any influence. It advocated a generally correct agrarian programme but could accomplish nothing practical having no connexion with the villages. What it had organisationally had been completely won over by his own party.

More Widespread Efforts. Having secured a substantial footing in Bombay, Roy turned his attention elsewhere, and the month of March 1931 saw him touring the United Provinces prior to proceeding to Karachi to attend, at Jawahar Lal Nehru's invitation, the annual session of the Indian National Congress at the end of the month. (It is of no small importance that the " Declaration of Fundamental Rights " of which the Karachi Congress approved at Nehru's instance is, in some respects, the minimum programme which Roy had advocated in Bombay a few weeks previously.) His efforts in the United Provinces were attended with a considerable measure of success, and it is arguable that it was the effects of the spadework which Roy put in, both before and after his visit to Karachi, that decided Nehru to launch his " no-tax " campaign at the end of November

1931. Although it is impossible to say, even after this lapse of time, how far Roy succeeded in impregnating Congress workers in the affected area with his views, it is known that he was behind the Central Peasants' League which was working on lines parallel to those of the Congress and that the League's efforts were attended with a considerable measure of success in certain parts of the province. It is certainly a fact that the newly formed Congress Socialist Party is stronger in the United Provinces than anywhere else, and I shall come later to the kinship of the Congress Socialist Party with Roy's organisation. In the *Revolutionary Age* of New York, Roy wrote in April 1931 : " All the political activities of the country are taking place on the background of a severe agrarian crisis which is driving the peasant masses to revolt. The Congress utilized this factor as the decisive weapon in its bargain with imperialism. Having made the compromise, it wanted to check the peasant revolt. Indeed, fear of the menacing forces of peasant revolt obliged the Congress to seek compromise with imperialism on the terms of complete capitulation. The peasant revolt, however, is not to be controlled. It still develops under the flag of the Congress, but defies all its frantic efforts to keep it under control. We are taking advantage of this transition stage for capturing the leadership of the movement. Active leaders in the villages still remain faithful Congressmen but are driven by circumstances to disregard the ideology and policy of the Congress. They were all confused when the Congress called off the " no-tax " campaign. In view of the condition of the peasantry, they know that the movement cannot be called off. Still, they are not yet ready to revolt against the Congress leadership. We have, therefore, provided them with a programme of immediate action which does not directly conflict with the Congress policy; but it is sure to intensify class struggle in the villages. The result will be that those working on the spot will be forced to break away from the Congress leadership unless they prefer to oppose the peasants openly, which they will not dare to do." This can only refer to the United Provinces.

It is interesting to observe in this connexion that Kandalkar, one of the leaders of the Bombay section of

Roy's party, wrote to his friends in Germany in December 1932, that, "there is a growing disillusionment amongst the rank and file of the Congress. We are making all efforts to intensify this discontent and to lead it into fruitful channels." The results of these efforts are perhaps, less apparent in Bombay than in the United Provinces, but it must not be forgotten that the Congress Socialists are at present an army without a leader.

Roy's Failure in the Punjab. In the Punjab, Roy met with no success and his overtures elicited a point-blank refusal of co-operation with his party. But the failure of Roy's efforts in this direction must be attributed more to his own arrest than to anything else. Had he had time to do so, he would undoubtedly have returned to the attack and have endeavoured to penetrate the *Kirti-Kisan* organisation, whose Communist proclivities are dealt with in a later chapter. As it was, he made efforts to capture by devious means another Punjabi revolutionary organisation which was ready to hand—the *Naa Jawan Bharat Sabha*. Essentially an Upper India growth which has failed to take root in down-country places where attempts have been made to plant it, the *Sabha* is a Communist organisation in all but name. Its emblems are the hammer and sickle, its preachings are but a slightly diluted form of Bolshevism and its connexion with the openly Communist *Kirti-Kisan Sabha* is no longer a matter for surmise.

Roy's Arrest and Conviction. Roy did not himself go to Calcutta but he attempted through his agents, whose number had by that time been considerably augmented, to capture the All-India Trades-Union Congress which was in session there in July 1931. His party secured the valuable support of Subhas Chandra Bose, the president, and succeeded in carrying the day against S. V. Deshpande, whose disgruntled departure from the meeting has already been mentioned. Roy then decided to incorporate the story of his victory in a sort of valentine with which to woo the legitimate trades-unionists who, since the Nagpur Congress in 1929, had been building up the All-India Trades-Union Federation and the All-India Railwaymen's Federation. After the meeting, the general secretary elected by Roy's majority group issued a statement

to the effect that, as the ultra-left group which had provoked the split at Nagpur in 1929 had now been driven out, there was no longer any reason why the unions which had seceded at Nagpur should not return to the fold and thereby remove "the last obstacle in the way of unity". "The All-India Trades-Union Congress", the statement proceeded, "should not officially be bound by any shade of political opinion. Its members collectively and individually shall have the freedom to hold any political view or belong to any political party, so long as they accept the basic principles of trades-unionism." Shortly after this appeal was issued, Roy's whereabouts were at last discovered and he was arrested by the Bombay police, prosecuted in Cawnpore in the original Communist conspiracy case (1924), and sentenced on the 9th January 1932, to twelve years' transportation. (The sentence was reduced on appeal to one of six years' rigorous imprisonment.) There is no gainsaying the fact that, in the seven months during which he was at large in India, Roy did very considerable mischief, despite the fact that the police were continually hot on his heels. His doctrines gained many adherents in Bombay and the United Provinces, and at a later date also in Calcutta and its environs. He made serious and by no means unsuccessful endeavours to impregnate the Congress with his views and was received, and well received, by several of the Congress leaders in different parts of India. Even Mr. Gandhi was aware of his presence in the Congress *pandal* at Karachi. Judged from the intellectual standpoint, Roy, ever a realist, stands out head and shoulders above all other Indian Communist leaders with the possible exception of Dr. G. M. Adhikari, and his continuous exhortations to "eschew the disastrous ultra-left policy" were calculated in the end to win over many more adherents to Communism than Deshpande's vaporous thunderings could ever have done. His conviction removed from the political arena a dangerous enemy of capitalism, landlordism and imperialism, and struck another blow at Indian Communism generally from which it is only now recovering.

The Effect of Roy's Removal. Roy's entourage, important additions to which were Maniben Kara, a

municipal councillor of Bombay, Kunwar Brajesh Singh Lal of Kalakankar, Jotyendra Kumar Banarji, Charles Mascarenhas and Rajani Mukharji, continued for a time their previous activities in selected areas on the lines laid down by the master both before and after his arrest (for Roy's incarceration did not, unfortunately, put an end to his literary efforts); but the work of all his adherents gradually lost its former virility, and within a year of Roy's conviction, the party which his enthusiasm and energy had so speedily built up had lost much of its power and prestige. By the end of 1932, Tayab Ali Shaikh, Charles Mascarenhas, Maniben Kara, and a number of other important Bombay leaders had been convicted for specific offences; R. S. Ruikar, the president of the majority group of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, had been sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment in Nagpur; Sundar Kabadi and Brajesh Singh had left for Europe, the former apparently a deserter from the cause and the latter for reasons unknown but not, it would seem, entirely connected with the party's work; and J. K. Banarji secured a false passport and followed them early in 1933. The conduct of negotiations in favour of trades-union unity fell into other more moderate hands and eventually petered out in Madras in July 1932. It seems improbable at the time of writing that a stable platform on which all parties can unite will ever be built from the wreckage of past attempts.

The Comintern's Designs. Although the difficulties against which the "official" Communists had to contend during these three years proved an insuperable obstacle on the road to successful reorganisation, yet no history of the period in question would be complete which did not include a brief summary of Moscow's intentions with regard to India. In December 1930 there appeared, first in the *International Press Correspondence*, the official organ of the Communist International, and later in the *London Daily Worker* and the *Moscow Pravda*, a thesis on *Indian Communism* entitled "Draft Platform of Action of the Communist Party of India". It was later translated into Urdu and a number of copies were found secreted on the person of a British Communist who was searched at Harwich

on his return from Moscow. A reprint made in Bombay was widely circulated at the Karachi Congress in March 1931 and yet another reprint was made in Berlin later in the same year. Of its wide circulation throughout India there is not the slightest doubt, for numerous and various copies have been discovered in many different parts of the country since its first appearance.

"Draft Platform of Action for India." After a vigorous denunciation of Gandhism and the Indian National Congress, this document advanced the following as the main tasks of the Indian Communist Party :—

1. The complete independence of India by the violent overthrow of British rule. The cancellation of all debts. The confiscation and nationalization of all British factories, banks, railways, sea and river transport, and plantations.
2. The establishment of a Soviet government. The realization of the right of national minorities to self-determination including separation. The abolition of the Native States. The creation of an Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.
3. The confiscation, without compensation, of all lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princes, churches, the British Government, officials and money-lenders, and the handing of them over for use by the toiling peasantry. The cancellation of slave agreements and all indebtedness of the peasantry to money-lenders and banks.
4. The eight-hour working day and the radical improvement of conditions of labour. An increase in wages, and State maintenance for the unemployed."

There followed the assertion that the Communist Party of India considered the sole means of winning independence to be "a general national armed insurrection against the British exploiters", and the "Platform" then proceeded to enunciate a series of tactical and strategical principles, *e.g.*, that individual acts of

terrorism would not achieve the emancipation of India or "revolutionary armed insurrection of the widest possible masses"; that the most dangerous obstacle to the victory of the revolution was the "left" element in the Indian National Congress—Jawahar Lal Nehru, Subhas Bose, etc.; and that a ruthless war must be waged on the left national reformists. The recital of a number of extravagant "demands" then followed, including the "spreading of revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers and police", and the thesis concluded with a statement to the effect that the Communist Party of India regarded itself as a section of the Communist International. The full text of this remarkable document is printed as an appendix.*

Communist Propaganda Abroad. This programme formed the basis of a steady and very expensive stream of Communist propaganda on the subject of India during the next two years. It is impossible, within the limited compass at my disposal, to deal in detail with this propaganda, on which was spent, after Roy was deposed, the bulk of the funds allotted to the Eastern Secretariat for Indian work. Such expressions as, "The workers and peasants will advance to the establishment of a Soviet India", "Demand the withdrawal of the troops and fight for a free independent India", "Young soldiers and sailors! Learn to use your rifles in order to turn them against the *bourgeoisie*!", or "Indian soldiers! Prepare to hoist, when the time is ripe, the banner of armed insurrection, and fight shoulder to shoulder with the toiling masses, to overthrow British Imperialism"—were of all too frequent occurrence and clearly showed where Moscow's thoughts were hovering. Although Moscow's meddling was not nearly so apparent in all this welter of words as it had been before the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement in October 1929, yet the Comintern still contrived to accomplish its work through its paid handmaidens, who affected to be independent of the control of their Muscovite masters.

The League Against Imperialism. The most prolific of these in the output of propaganda on the subject of India was undoubtedly the League Against Imperialism,

which came into being shortly before Sir David Petrie's book was produced, and of which it was there written that "it was suspected, though not at first established, that the League derived its inspiration and a great part of its funds from the Communist International; and the organisers of the League were at special pains to conceal this fact". Evidence which has accumulated since then (some of it was tendered at Meerut) makes it perfectly clear that the League is "an auxiliary organisation of the Communist International over which the Comintern has complete control", and that its functions are to link up the Communist movement with national revolutionary movements in the colonies. Till August 1931, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya remained in charge of the International Secretariat of the League in Berlin working in conjunction with, and under the direction of, Willi Münzenberg, the well-known German Communist. In that month, however, his place was taken by Clemens Palme Dutt, the notorious British Communist of semi-Indian parentage who figured so prominently behind the scenes in the Meerut case. Later, in March 1933, came the Nazi *putsch* which made Berlin too hot for the League, and the office was transferred, first to Paris, and then to London where it was placed in charge of Reginald Bridgeman. These changes have made no perceptible difference to the League's activities, except that the English law of sedition has made the publishers of its literature somewhat more circumspect in their recent appeals to serving soldiers. The League still has India as its main objective, however, and thereby raises natural doubts of the advisability of affording sanctuary in the metropolis to an organisation which has the disruption of the British Empire always in view.

Other Propagandist Bodies. Other mouthpieces of the Communist mind which have turned their attention to India have been the Society for the Promotion of Cultural Relations with Soviet Russia, the very efficient broadcasting stations in Moscow and Tashkent, the International Juridical Association, a number of *quasi*-scientific institutions in Russia itself, and the Friends of the Soviet Union with branches in many countries. For a time also there was the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Congress in Shanghai. The bulk of this propaganda material has latterly been posted in London, where also the *Inter-*

national Press Correspondence is now printed and published, and Moscow has thereby deftly turned the arrows of those critics who might seek to impute to her hostile activities against a country with which she is in friendly relations. The "technical reasons"* to which the previous chapter referred have now become more apparent.

Anti-War Bodies. Another source possible of infection is the large variety of anti-war bodies which, as apparently purely pacifist non-political organisations, attract intellectual cranks and unsuspecting social-democrats. Proof that some of these bodies are in close co-operation with, if not actually controlled by, Communist organisations is not lacking, and the part which they are destined to play in Moscow's schemes is the clearer in the light of a speech made by Zinoviev at a session of the enlarged I. K. K. I. in March 1926. "A very important form of organisation of Communist mass influence", he said, "are the sympathizing mass organisations for definite special purposes. . . . Peace societies against war, organisations against colonial atrocities and oppression of Eastern peoples, are new types of sympathizing mass organisations which will come under consideration in many countries in the immediate future." Subsequent attempts to penetrate this movement resulted in the withdrawal from it of many prominent persons whose pacifist activities had no ulterior motive, but the Comintern's work went on, and Willi Münzenberg was deputed to convene a conference of the "International Committee for the Fight against War", which was eventually held in Amsterdam in May 1932. The ostensible direction of this conference was in the hands of Henri Barbusse, the French intellectual, but the Soviet Union was represented and the great majority of those who attended it were Communists. A detailed report of the proceedings appeared in the *International Press Correspondence* from which the following is an extract: "To sum up, it may be stated that this conference represented an excellent *working meeting*, concentrated in *mass action*. . . . This Paris Conference must be considered as a meeting greatly contributing to the *consolidation of the mass movement against imperialist war*." Other conferences of its kind have since been held,

* *Vide* page 149.

the result of which has been the emergence of a "World Committee Against War and Fascism", which is a proven auxiliary of the Comintern, subsidized and controlled from Moscow.

A More Subdued Note. Despite the flamboyant note of optimism which pervaded this unceasing stream of literature on the subject of India, however, evidence was not lacking that the decline of the influence of the C. P. I. gave rise to considerable misgivings in Moscow. Thus Molotov, an important member of the Politbureau, explained the position in India to a Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held early in July 1930 in much less euphemistic terms than is usual on such occasions: "In India a Communist organisation is in the course of formation; this will undergo many trials and tests in the impending revolutionary struggle before it can take its place as the Bolshevik vanguard of the Indian proletariat." A little less than a year later, Robin Page Arnot was sent by the Communist Party of Great Britain to attend the eleventh plenum of the Communist International in Moscow. He admitted in the course of his speech that the Communist Party of India existed, but existed in the process of formation. This same session devoted a considerable amount of its time to the discussion and eventual re-affirmation of the Comintern's Indian policy, and India figured prominently also in the proceedings of Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions held in Moscow in August 1930. Summing up the work accomplished by this latter convocation, the *Pravda* of the 1st September 1930 stated that highly important directions had been given to the Indian revolutionary trades-union movement.

The Communist Programme for 1933. Another authoritative Communist statement in regard to India is to be found in the thesis presented to the twelfth plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International held in Moscow in August 1932. The part which India was to play in the revolutionary movement of 1933 was set forth as follows: "To strengthen the Communist Party politically and organisationally; to train Bolshevik cadres; to wage stubborn struggle in the reformist trade unions; to develop a wide anti-imperialist front; to

liberate the masses from the influence of the National Congress ; to make agitational and organisational preparations for a general strike , to give the greatest possible support to the peasant movement for the non-payment of taxes, rents and debts ; and to popularize the basic slogans and tasks of the agrarian revolution."

Communist Agents. In order to ascertain how its directions and enunciated policy were being carried out in India and to advise its Indian comrades, the Comintern dispatched to India a series of agents of its own choosing. The first, who successfully evaded all efforts to locate him, appears to have arrived at the close of 1929 and to have returned to Europe after a six months' tour of inspection. Nothing is known of what he achieved, but subsequent events have proved that his visit was of no practical value to Moscow and it may be dismissed without further consideration. Similar is the case of Prem Lal Singh, an Indian student who had just completed a course at the Lenin Institute in Moscow when he returned to India early in 1930 on a mission from the Communist International. After spending a few months in Meerut, where he established contact with some of the prisoners, he returned empty handed to Moscow on the pretext that he had been afraid of the police.

William Nathan Kweit and Harry Somers. At about the same time there arrived in Bombay an American " antiquarian " named William Nathan Kweit. He was accompanied by his wife (*née* Helen Bowlen) and was joined in July 1930 by another American, Harry Somers, who posed as the representative of a cellulose company. Kweit and Somers were found to be meeting each other surreptitiously and to be consorting also with certain members of Deshpande's party. They were well supplied with funds and their arrival coincided with the publication of certain illicit news-sheets by the Deshpande group. Inquiries disclosed the fact that they had secured passports under false pretences, and probably under fictitious names, and were almost certainly underground Communist agents. The presence in India of two such representatives of the Comintern had already been suggested by secret information and both Kweit and Somers were deported under the Foreigners Act in September 1930.

Khushi Muhammad. It was at this juncture that M. N. Roy returned to India, and it is an obvious assumption that when Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi, was dispatched to India some months later, it was mainly because news of Roy's successes was causing anxiety in Moscow. As has been shown in the previous chapter, Sepassi had formerly worked in M. N. Roy's European organisation and had been for several years engaged in secretarial work for the Comintern in Moscow. In April 1931 he arrived in the Hejaz in the hope that he would be able to mingle with Indian pilgrims and return with them to India unobserved. Fortunately, there was some hitch over the Egyptian visa for his false passport and he arrived in Mecca a few days after the departure of the pilgrims. Failing to achieve his object, he returned to Moscow in November 1931.

Henry G. Lynd. More successful in his efforts was Henry G. Lynd, another American, who arrived in Bombay in February 1931 and remained in India until he was deported in December of that year. Lynd, who was in affluent circumstances, posed as an importer of skins, but inquiries disclosed that his business in New York was exceedingly dubious and that he had given a false reference when applying for a passport. There was evidence also that he was a Communist. Lynd's mission to India was clearly to apportion the blame for the "official" party's breakdown, to remedy whatever defects he found, and to fight the influence of M. N. Roy's party. He attended several secret meetings of the so-called Executive Committee of the Communist Party of India in Bombay, which is known to have been placed in funds to the extent of Rs. 12,000 shortly after Lynd's arrival. Lynd was, moreover, largely responsible for the issue of a new pamphlet entitled "Programme of the Communist Party of India" which naturally had as its basis the Draft Platform or Action already referred to. It would appear that Lynd correctly diagnosed the position, namely, that, though in theory Deshpande's party might have some political influence, organically it had no strength, and he, therefore, proposed a complete overhaul of the existing machinery. The party was to be entirely purged of Congress and other reformist influences and would not, at

first, attempt to include the peasants within its ranks. These latter would gradually be drawn within the net through the influence of their fellow-villagers in the factories whose activities were to be specially directed against *bourgeois* and reformist influences by propaganda in the towns and cities. The Workers' and Peasants' Parties were to serve as a reservoir for steady and permanent recruitment of new members to the Communist Party, and there would be a systematic transfer of politically prepared workers into illegal organisations. The first and only practical step taken to bring this programme into force was the calling of a Young Workers' Conference in Bombay; this was later banned by the authorities. On arrival in Marseilles in the course of deportation to the United States of America, Lynd left the ship and made a bee-line for Moscow, there to report his conclusions to those at whose instance he had undoubtedly gone to India.

Amir Haidar Khan. The next (in point of time, though probably first in order of importance) of Moscow's emissaries to be discovered was Amir Haidar Khan, a Punjabi and an absconding accused in the Meerut conspiracy case. Amir Haidar was by no means the least of those for whose arrest warrants were issued in March 1929, and his continuance at large might have had serious results had he not preferred to spend the greater part of his freedom abroad. He returned surreptitiously to India in the guise of a seaman at the end of March 1931 and settled down in Madras where he began to fulfil the mission on which the Third International is believed to have sent him to India. He gradually established himself as a Communist leader of importance and drew round him a growing circle of workers for the Communist cause, amongst them being D. Subba Rao whom he engaged as a full-time propagandist for work amongst textile workers. Slow though he was to establish himself in his new surroundings, he had, nevertheless, within a year of his arrival, formed groups in three important mills, organised a local branch of the Young Workers' League, and dispatched at least one candidate for training in Moscow with a promise that more should follow. Having previously worked in Bombay for some time, he had little difficulty in establishing touch with Communists there, but

his ambition seems to have been that Madras should ultimately supersede Bombay as the headquarters of the Communist movement in India. In fact, preparations for an all-India convention to be held in Madras were already in train when he was arrested on the 7th May 1932.

The papers seized at the time of his arrest showed how complete was his liaison with Bombay. There were amongst them letters from both Deshpande's and Randive's parties, which were then at daggers drawn. The letters in question showed that each party had laid its case before Amir Haidar in an attempt to win him to its side. Of the two he appears to have preferred the "secessionists" (as Randive's followers were called), and it is reported that he had arranged to smuggle their reports and literature to Moscow and to secure their recognition there. This should have been a matter of no great difficulty in view of the report about Deshpande which Lynd submitted to the Communist International at the end of 1931. Randive's reports were almost certainly to be carried by students whose dispatch to Moscow, at the rate of one a month, Amir Haidar had arranged. It is a little uncertain how many of these students actually left, but it was probably three or four; it is known that another was to have left shortly after the 22nd May 1932, while the Calcutta and Bombay centres had been asked to select candidates for future dispatch. The elaborate preparations made in this regard are of particular interest. One letter asked for a most detailed history of intending students. Question (e) of this document ran, "Whether he is suffering from T. B. or similar disease (without this information we cannot get financial help)", which suggested that Moscow was insisting on a higher standard of physical fitness than in the days when Muzaffar Ahmad and Soumendra Nath Tagore were taken into the fold. From another letter it was to be inferred that the "financial help" consisted of the cost of the passage to Moscow and amounted, in each case, to some 500 rupees, which "can be demanded at the centre when the comrade reaches headquarters".

Amir Haidar Khan, with his recent training in methods of Communist attack, was clearly a most dangerous individual, and the fact that he was sentenced at the end of the year to terms of imprisonment totalling

two and a half years gives cause for congratulation. He had served this term by the autumn of 1934, but so quickly and so energetically did he resume his old connexions and practices that within a month he had to be imprisoned again under the terms of the Madras State Prisoners Regulation, 1819.

John Magnus Clark and William Bennett. Two other Communist agents who arrived in India during this period were John Magnus Clark and William Bennett who reached Bombay in September 1931. Beyond the fact that they were obviously not what they claimed to be and that both had left Canada supposedly for Moscow, nothing could be proved against them. Clark and Bennett brought with them considerable sums of money of the spending of which they were unable to give a satisfactory account. An investigation of their case raised the strong presumption that a not inconsiderable part of it was spent in furtherance of the Communist movement. This and other circumstances, into which it is unnecessary to go here, led to their arrest in September 1932. They ultimately left the country at their own request in the following month.

The Standard of Moscow's Emissaries. It cannot be claimed, of course, that all of Moscow's emissaries to India have been objects of official attention, but it may be accounted fortunate indeed that so many of them have come under the watchful eye of the police. Except for Amir Haidar Khan, none has any practical achievement to his credit. This is due to a variety of reasons, not least of which is the preventive action which the authorities in India have been able to take. But another important reason is the inferior stamp of the agents themselves, and it was a strange freak of fortune which placed substantial funds in the hands of those who were incapable of spending to the best advantage but kept an energetic enthusiast like Amir Haidar Khan in penury to the detriment of all his ambitious schemes. The Meerut convicts are known to have made complaints to Moscow on this score and to have specifically asked that British citizens be sent in the future. If, therefore, the Comintern repeats its former mistakes in this respect, it will have only itself to blame.

CHAPTER 18.

AFTER MEERUT.

A Review of the Position at the Beginning of 1933. Chapter 15 left the Meerut prisoners in jail ; the last chapter was mainly concerned with the laboured yet futile efforts of those whom they left behind but it also mentioned the temporary effect of M. N. Roy's return to India. Before proceeding to examine the history of Indian Communism in 1933 and 1934, it would be wise to take stock of the situation as it was at the beginning of that period. Broadly speaking, Indian Communists were divided into two parties, the " official " Communist Party and the followers of M. N. Roy, the former blindly following Moscow's direction and feverishly advocating an immediate general strike with or without pretext, while the latter, having grown sceptical of the competence of Stalin's advisers on Indian questions, preferred to consolidate their position before proceeding to extremes. It is to be hoped that previous chapters have made it sufficiently clear that the success of the Communist movement (as, indeed, of any movement) in India is almost entirely dependent on capable and energetic leadership—much more so than in most other countries of the world. This being so, the removal of thirty odd leaders in March 1929 naturally caused the virtual collapse of what was becoming an extremely dangerous movement, and the arrest of M. N. Roy, just as he was getting into his stride, had a like effect. The inadequacy of the supply of competent alternative leaders was the logical outcome of neglect of the Party during the palmy days of 1928 and this deficiency became the more pronounced by reason of the periodical imprisonment of such leaders as there were and the consequent dislocation of any arrangements which might have been made for training new cadres. This state of affairs also had reactions in Moscow, who was working more or less in the dark and was seriously handicapped both by the absence of reliable information and by her apparent inability to obtain the services of foreign agents of the calibre of Spratt and Bradley.

New Developments. This, then, in brief, was the position at the end of 1932, since when certain new factors have made their appearance which seem likely, with proper handling, to provide Moscow with fresh opportunities to cause, at least embarrassment to Governments in India and, in the extreme, chaos in the country. These factors include the emergence of persons like Jawahar Lal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose* as would-be champions of the Communist creed and programme, the swing towards active Communism of many of the terrorists of Bengal, the decision of the Sikh *Ghadr* Party to compete for Moscow's favours, and the growing feeling in India that Gandhi, the only Indian with any pretensions to all-India leadership, has failed as a political leader in the march towards freedom. Which of the many indigenous weapons Moscow will decide to use, after taking what expert advice is now available, is still a matter of surmise, but the history of the past fifteen years makes it almost certain that she will make another endeavour to blend as many of them as possible into a composite organisation fashioned to her own design. Indian Communism during the past two years falls, therefore, into four main compartments—(1) the Communist Party of India, (2) M. N. Roy's party and the infant Congress Socialist Party, (3) converted terrorists, and (4) the Sikh *Ghadr* Party—and it will be convenient to devote a separate chapter to each of these aspects of the general movement.

Criticism from Meerut. To take the Communist Party of India first. Early in 1933 a memorandum was received in Bombay, which seems indisputably to have been intended as the swan-song of the Communists then under trial at Meerut. This document also referred to two earlier reports from the same source; one of them was written in 1931 for the information of H. G. Lynd, the Comintern's representative in Bombay, and the other, compiled a year later, was to have been shown to J. M. Clark and William Bennett, whom it described as the representa-

* Bose's most recent speeches and writings reveal him as an admirer of many of the elements of Fascism, and it is a little difficult to say at present which camp his mental explorations will ultimately take him into. For the time being he is *persona non grata* in Moscow.

tives of the R. I. L. U. There is a good deal of internal evidence to show that both these earlier reports were intended for perusal by the authorities in Moscow and it may be assumed that they reached their destination. They appear to have contained a lengthy analysis of the causes of the Party's downfall and instructions for reorganisation on an all-India basis. Amongst the causes set forth were neglect of provincial contacts and misleading reports to the Comintern, but, first and foremost, the prolonged factional fight in Bombay, the centre of the movement, and the failure to submit the questions involved for arbitration either by the general membership of the Party, the Meerut accused, or even Moscow's own representatives in Bombay. The Bombay group was also accused of having lost contact with the Communist International, damage which had cost the movement dear and which it would take many months to repair. The writers were prepared to admit, however, that the determined offensive launched by the Government, of which their own arrest was a part, had made some sort of retreat inevitable; that the very active "Roy opposition" had provided further difficulties; and finally, that the civil disobedience movement had presented the Party with very difficult tactical problems. Nevertheless, they deplored the mismanagement and lack of activity which had allowed things to reach a stage where practically all the unions over which the Party had previously held control had passed into the hands of their adversaries, the Roy group. They admitted the existence at the time of writing* of only three definite groups, in Bombay, Calcutta and Nagpur, which, though known to each other, maintained no sort of regular contact between themselves or with the nominal centre in Bombay.

Recommendations for Future Reorganisation.

It is unnecessary to go any further into the details of these documents except to mention some of the more important proposals which they put forward for the rehabilitation of the Party. These are the more interesting because of efforts which have subsequently been made to give effect to them. A provisional central committee should be set up forthwith, composed of four elected representatives

* The middle of 1932.

each from Bombay and Bengal, two from the Central Provinces, and possibly one or two from the Punjab. This committee should assemble under cover of a meeting of the Executive Committee of the "Red" All-India Trades-Union Congress and adopt a suitable constitution. (The Draft Platform of Action would, of course, form the programme.) The agenda for this meeting should include, consideration of reports on the factional fight in Bombay, the election of a secretariat of three members, and the establishment of contacts in the Punjab, the United Provinces and Madras. The Committee should meet again after three months to consider the results of work on these lines and possibly to arrange for a Party convention to elect a permanent central committee. These documents also emphasized the dangers of using the posts and telegraphs as channels of communication and advanced a suggestion that railwaymen should be employed as couriers for the conveyance of all secret correspondence. They further advocated the immediate publication of vernacular weekly papers in various centres, the free distribution of weekly or fortnightly news-sheets in large numbers, and the circulation of "international material" through the medium of an English monthly in order to enable provincial leaders to judge of their theoretical development and also to attract intellectuals to the movement. Another recommendation was that the liaison which the Bengal group had established with Communists in Malaya and China should be maintained as being a possible channel of communication with the Far Eastern Bureau.

Suggestions to the Comintern. But the most interesting part of these reports was probably that which dealt with matters outside the Party's immediate control, and the suggestions contained in this section make it quite clear that the reports were intended as much for Moscow's consumption as for the edification of those in India. Amongst them was a recommendation that a substantial number of young men, about thirty to begin with, should be sent forthwith to Moscow for training; if the scheme proved a success another batch could be sent each year. Methods of avoiding arrest on the way and of ensuring the secrecy of the scheme were also discussed in considerable detail. The Comintern was also warned not to trust as

representatives of the Communist Party of India, *émigrés* who had been away from their country for long periods, but was advised rather to rely for its information on periodical visits to Moscow from members of the C. P. I. or, if that were impossible, on reports direct from India. An immediate need was said to be the issue by the Comintern of an "Open Letter" to the Communist Party of India, analysing the mistakes of the past three years, apportioning the blame and giving a final decision on some of the major points in dispute between the various groups into which the Party had split up. Lastly, it was suggested that two representatives of the Communist International should be sent, apparently as a permanent measure, to organise and supervise the work of the Party in India. One of them was to be stationed in Bombay in charge of the central committee; the other was to have his headquarters in Calcutta and was to tour in the provinces when necessary. The writers of these reports pertinently pointed out that these two men would have more scope for accomplishing their appointed tasks if they were British citizens, to whom, of course, the provisions of the Foreigners Act do not apply. It was desirable, they said, that these emissaries should not work wholly underground, as previous representatives had done, but more or less openly and as far as possible within the law. They could, for instance, associate openly with trades-unionist and political movements of all complexions on the pretext of studying them; they should, on the other hand, make no public speeches and should not allow their association with Communists to become too conspicuous. Past experience had shown that the usefulness of comrades who remained strictly underground was seriously reduced. They could meet very few people connected with the movement and, however they disguised their intentions, they would be closely watched and their underground work rendered much more difficult.

Some Results of the Recommendations. Even before these reports made their appearance in Bombay effect had been given to several of the recommendations which they contained. Amir Haidar Khan, for example, instituted a kind of courier service between Bombay and Madras with the help of employees of the Railway Mail Service, and it will be remembered, too, that, just prior

to his arrest, he had been busily arranging the dispatch of Indian students for training in Moscow. The "Open Letter" to the Communist Party of India which appeared in the *International Press Correspondence* towards the end of 1932 has not, however, as yet been mentioned. This letter purported to emanate from the Communist Parties of China, Great Britain and Germany and dealt with precisely those subjects which the Meerut prisoners had suggested it should.

The Contents of the Open Letter. In view of the doctrinal importance which Dr. Adhikari and others later attached to it, it will be as well to give a short account of its contents. It asserted that the development of the Indian Communist movement was being blocked by a state of discord and the separate existence of Party groups, and stated that "it must be thoroughly realized (and this will determine how seriously and consistently the Communists stand by the illegal Party and the revolutionary struggle) that the leading organs of the Party and the kernel of its organisations must be in an illegal position and that mixing the conspirative and open apparatus of the Party organisation is fatal for the Party and plays into the hands of the Government provocation. While developing the illegal organisation in every way, measures must be taken for preserving and strengthening the conspirative kernel of the Party organisation. For this purpose all kinds of open activity (in the press, meetings, leagues, trade unions, etc.), special groups and commissions, etc., should be formed which, working under the leadership of Party committees, should under no circumstances injure the existence of illegal nuclei." "To sum up", it concluded, "the slogan of an all-India illegal, centralized Communist Party, ideologically and organisationally united, a true section of the Comintern, fighting for the platform of action of the Communist Party of India and the programme of the Communist International, must become the central slogan for gathering and forming the Party and for the struggle against waverings, against a tendency of keeping to isolated circles, against toning down of the struggle against national reformism and opportunist sectarianism, all of which hinder the victory of the working class."

Further Failures. The appearance in Bombay of these reports from Meerut was instantly followed by signs of drastic reorganisation and by a regrouping of leaders and parties, seemingly with the object of excluding from further control of any of the Party's activities those whom the report had condemned. This outburst of enthusiasm was not, however, very long-lived and by April 1933 the Party had fallen back into the old rut. The annual session of the "Red" A. I. T. U. C., which was to have been held at Jamshedpur during the Easter holidays and at which further important developments were expected, was first postponed till June and then abandoned altogether. During April and May a situation developed which was particularly favourable to the Party's purposes, but its leaders showed themselves quite incapable of grasping their opportunity. The textile mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad were feeling the full effect of the general trade depression and of Japanese competition ; a number of them closed down ; and a reduction of working hours and the introduction of more economical methods of work in those which kept open led to an all-round cut in wages. Naturally the vast army of mill workers and unemployed became discontented. But, although the Communists organised numerous meetings and processions and issued countless leaflets advocating a general strike, their indecision and general ineffectiveness prevented them from turning so favourable a set of circumstances to good account. The *Girni Kangar* Union, the mainstay of the strikes in 1928 and 1929, was still in the hands of G. L. Kandalkar, a lieutenant of M. N. Roy, who also advocated a general strike, but in more cautious terms which insisted on the prior establishment of a substantial fund for the relief of the strikers. Although the "official" Communists made stronger endeavours than ever to regain their control of this union, first by negotiation and, when this failed, by open assault, their efforts proved no more successful than had several previous attempts during the past three years.

The Ahmedabad Union. The struggle between these two parties was extended at about this time to Ahmedabad where a new Mill *Mazdoor* Union had just been formed by a few extremists. Each side sent a deputation to Ahmedabad to organise and capture the support

of this new union. The result was at first a stalemate, but the "official" group gained the ascendancy later in the year when B. F. Bradley, freshly released from jail, paid a fleeting visit to Ahmedabad before sailing for England. Bradley's display of interest in the union seems to have set it on its feet again and there can be no doubt that, but for the timely arrest of those in control of it in April 1934, it would have caused considerable trouble during the "general" strike which began in that month.

The Release of the Meerut Prisoners. It was not till middle of August 1933, when the first of the Meerut prisoners were released, that anything in the nature of a serious attempt at reorganisation was made. It is true, of course, that, long before August, Dr. Adhikari was released on bail pending the hearing of his appeal and that he spent a good deal of his time in Bombay studying the position of the Communist Party of India and doubtless planning its reorganisation. But his hands were tied by the fact that, if his activities came too prominently to notice, his bail-bond might be cancelled at any moment. Shib Nath Banerji, who had been acquitted by the Sessions Court, had also returned to work, in a comparatively small way, amongst the East Indian Railway workers at Lillooah in co-operation with his former associates. Of those who were released on pronouncement of judgment at Allahabad, P. C. Joshi immediately set to work resuming his old contacts in Cawnpore, Allahabad and Lucknow, Lester Hutchinson thought it advisable to return to England, Gopal Basak retired into comparative obscurity and Shamsul Huda was welcomed back into the Calcutta fold. The rest were those who had refused to admit that they were anything but trades-unionists and were mostly supporters of M. N. Roy's less militant doctrines.

Adhikari, the Specialist in Reorganisation. Freed from further anxiety, Dr. Adhikari set his hand most energetically to the task which was nearest his heart—the practical fulfilment of four years' concentrated and corporate scheming inside the Meerut jail. At first confining his attentions to Bombay, he interested himself in the Young Workers' League which celebrated the third anniversary of its inauguration with fresh enthusiasm.

He was instrumental in the revival of Deshpande's Marxian Students' Club, which was intended to serve as a recruiting ground for the Anti-Imperialist League and the All-India Communist Party, and mapped out for it a system of study circles for the teaching of Communist theory. He also revived the intention of holding the session of the "Red" Trades-Union Congress at Jamshedpur, under cover of which an attempt was to be made to establish the new provisional central committee of the Communist Party of India.

The Provisional Central Committee. In this he was unsuccessful, but he travelled instead to Calcutta early in November 1933 to attend an informal meeting of his own convening. He took with him S. G. Patkar, a member of S. V. Deshpande's group, and met there P. C. Joshi and two anonymous representatives* of the Punjab and the Central Provinces. Bengal was represented by three of its leading Communists about whose identity there is some uncertainty, but Abdul Halim was certainly one of them. After some discussion on the comparative advantages of an "organisational committee", with no political or controlling authority, merely to arrange a national convention which would set the movement going again, the meeting proceeded to transform itself into something more powerful which was called "the nucleus of the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of India". It will be sufficient to say that the main reason for the selection of the latter form of organisation was that it was felt that a Communist party can only be built up by planned conscious effort from the top and the development of initiative from below. What was needed was not a federation of autonomous units but a centralized all-India party over which the Comintern could resume effective unitary control. The "nucleus", therefore, applied itself to the tasks not only of composing factional differences and of reorganising existing provincial groups and establishing them in provinces where none existed, but also of co-ordinating the activities of such groups and of making preliminary arrangements for holding an All-India Party Convention to elect a more regular committee. Meanwhile,

* Probably a Calcutta Sikh and M. L. Jaywant from Nagpur.

it was decided to draw up a draft political and organisational thesis and to circulate it to members of existing groups. The "nucleus" was also to endeavour to widen its authority by co-opting three (two Punjalis and one from Bombay) of the Meerut prisoners who were due for release in the immediate future, two other competent Communists from other provinces, and also two members of Randive's group of "secessionists" when unity was achieved in Bombay. It was hoped that these tasks would be accomplished in three or four months' time, after which the next meeting was to be held. The meeting did not consider it would be justified in forming a Politbureau, a Control Commission, or other such committees until the more representative meeting was held in February or March 1934. Dr. Adhikari was appointed as the temporary secretary and was authorized to nominate his successor should misfortune befall him. All the decisions made and the action taken on them would, of course, have to be ratified by the second and more representative meeting in due course.

Work in the Provinces. Another decision related to the establishment of provincial committees containing as many worker-members as was conveniently possible. These committees were to perform their provincial tasks through elected bureaux each consisting of five members who would divide between them the portfolios of party organisation, education, propaganda, mass work and secretarial work, the last of which would include theoretical and organisational supervision and co-ordination of the work of the other four departments. The "nucleus" recognized the fact that each province was faced with a different problem, and accordingly specified different immediate tasks for each, pending the completion of which it would not be advisable to try to form provincial committees on the lines suggested. Thus, the *Kirti-Kisan* Party in the Punjab was to be changed into a series of peasant unions which would concentrate on a few promising areas rather than attempt to cover the whole province; the railway and textile workers in Lahore must be treated separately and be given regular courses of Marxist-Leninist teaching; and the control of the whole movement should be placed in the hands of a sort of Anti-Imperialist League which would

derive its authority from the collective affiliations of the various groups at work in the province. Work in the Central Provinces was to be confined to Nagpur and Akola, though contacts might be maintained in Pulgaon and other outstations if this could be arranged without interfering with the work at headquarters. Regular study circles were to be organised for the textile and tannery workers in Cawnpore and also amongst the students in Lucknow, Benares and Allahabad. More vigorous attempts were to be made to start a peasant section in Bengal. The Bombay difficulties also needed very special handling and a sub-committee was set up to deal with them. The programme seems to have been conceived on more modest lines than past experience would have led one to expect. For instance, the more backward provinces were not asked to recruit a large party membership, but to form a "kernel" of five or six whole-hearted workers; and even a well-developed province such as Bengal was merely told that a determined effort should be made to increase the strength of the Party to fifty within six months. The intention underlying all these proposals was revealed on several occasions by injunctions to those who would be in charge of the new provincial machinery to impress upon the members so recruited the urgent need for maintaining close contact with the working classes. It seems, pertinent to add that all the decisions which the "nucleus" made were admittedly based on either the Draft Platform of Action for the Communist Party of India* or the Open Letter from the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of China, Great Britain and Germany.†

Activities in Furtherance of the New Programme.

The various members of the new provisional committee returned to their homes and lost no time in putting the programme into effect. Within a month or two the rival groups in Bombay had been brought to a compromise, a new League Against Imperialism had been formed in the Punjab and the strengthening of M. L. Jaywant's Communist groups in Nagpur and Akola was progressing. In Bengal, too, the influence of Gopendra Nath Chakravarty and Dharani Goswami, both of whom had recently been released from jail, supported by Radha Raman Mittra, who

* Appendix II.

† *Vide* page 185.

was acquitted by the High Court, brought about an amalgamation between the orthodox Communist Party and a group of disillusioned terrorists who had come to believe that mass violence would be more effective than individual assassinations. The programme of this combined party did not differ very materially from that which the November meeting had outlined. Secret work was to be supplemented by open propaganda by a separate department, and a finance department was to collect subscriptions and donations in order that the Party might be made more or less self-supporting. A certain latitude was to be given to the terrorist section who were to be allowed to resort to dacoity and other forms of crime as a means of supplementing the Party's funds, provided that they did not thereby hamper the work in other directions.

A New Thesis on Indian Communism. In due course the promised thesis appeared, a masterpiece of theoretical penmanship of which none but Dr. Adhikari was capable. Early in February 1934, a cyclostyled pamphlet made its appearance in Bombay and was sent in the weeks that followed for secret distribution in several industrial centres such as Lahore, Calcutta and Ahmedabad. Its title was "The Communist—Organ of the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Section of the Communist International)"; its contents were mainly the new thesis. The thesis was later reproduced, in an apocryphal form which kept it within the English law of sedition, in the *International Press Correspondence*, receiving thereby the formal blessing of the Comintern. It was said, by way of introduction, that the programme which it contained had been accepted by the provisional committee. There is no record of a second meeting having been held prior to the publication of the thesis and it must, therefore, be assumed that, when K. N. Joglekar made a tour of the larger part of industrial India at the end of 1933, one of his objects was to obtain the individual assent of the members of the Committee. It is known that a part of his task was to press Dr. Adhikari's views on local Communist leaders. The thesis would be worth examination, if only because it provides a convenient résumé of Moscow's present aims and methods in India; but it also represents four years of

careful remodelling and assiduous polishing of the Communist programme by the most expert Communists whom India has yet produced, in daily consultation with each other and with those chosen Englishmen who had found, with them, where the shoe pinched when it was actually being worn, and it is, therefore, entitled to even greater consideration on that account.

The Course of the Revolution. After dilating at some length on the iniquities of imperialism and discussing the rôle of the petty *bourgeoisie*, the peasantry, and the working-class in the revolutionary struggle against it, the thesis proceeded to outline the course which the revolution should take. First must come "the transformation of individual strikes into a general political strike, the development of spontaneous peasant movements against rents or debts or taxes into an all-India movement, the fostering of a nation-wide agitation in favour of complete independence, and the spread of revolutionary propaganda amongst the police and in the army". The next step is to be the overthrow of British imperialism, the Princes, and the landlords; this "can only be achieved by an armed mass insurrection of the workers, peasants, and soldiers under the leadership of the working-class and its party, the Communist Party of India", and must only be attempted when workers and peasants are ready to work in unison. These "organs of struggle" will be so mobilized on the basis of strike and peasant committees, and later of soldiers' committees also, that they will be capable of immediate transformation into "organs of power" when the revolution has succeeded. The struggle will be conducted by the proletariat masses under their own leadership and only the co-ordination of the struggle will be in the hands of the Communist Party of India. There will thus emerge a net-work of workers' soviets and peasants' soviets, the basic units of soviet power, and, when the hour of re-construction comes, these local soviets will be welded into one Indian Soviet State on the basis of "the fullest democracy of the toilers".

"But the process of revolution does not stop there", the treatise went on to say. "Under the rule of the workers' and peasants' Soviet Government, there will be a rapid development of industry, a progressive diminution

of the importance of the capitalist elements, and the transition of agriculture from the individual to the collective basis of production." The first task, the filling of the fighting cadres, must at once be taken in hand. This could only be done "in the process of actual struggle by the formation of strike committees and revolutionary peasant committees" and it was on this part of the programme that Indian Communists must concentrate.

Relations with Other Groups. It is unnecessary to go in great detail into the writer's criticism of the policies advocated by M. N. Roy, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Subhas Bose and Mr. Gandhi. Of Roy he said that, "a careful perusal of his book reveals that beneath a layer of Communist revolutionary phrases is hidden a denial of Communist revolutionary practice." He whole-heartedly condemned Nehru's idea of a Constituent Assembly, and urged the pressing need of informing the untouchable workers that "their emancipation cannot be achieved by their being taken inside the fold of Hinduism". In spite of his differences with this class of person, however, he advocated the participation by Communists in all their mass demonstrations, solely for the purpose of putting forward Communist views and slogans. "It is necessary", he said (quoting from the Open Letter to which reference has already been made) "to support all revolutionary student demonstrations; to be in the forefront in all clashes with the police; to protest against all political arrests, etc., constantly criticizing the Congress leadership, especially 'left' leadership, and calling on the masses for higher forms of struggle." This part of the programme was to be in the hands of an Anti-Imperialist League which would, of course, work openly but under the control of the Communist Party in the same way as the strike committees and other Communist organisations.

Relations with the Terrorists. Nor did this all-embracing treatise omit to deal with the problem of the terrorists. "It is the duty of the Communist Party of India", it ran, "to win over the rank and file of the terrorist groups, and especially of those groups who are showing an inclination towards Marxism and Communism, to the standpoint of consistent Marxism and of the Draft Platform of the Communist Party of India. While re-

cognizing the heroism and the self-sacrifice of individual terrorists, it is essential to point out the futility and harmfulness of the method of individual terrorism, showing, at the same time, that Communists do not oppose violence but believe that it is only the mass violence of the revolutionary workers and peasants and of the town poor which will overthrow the rule of British Imperialism."

Work in the Trades-Unions. Trades-unions, too, were to be brought under Communist influence by both open and secret work within their ranks. "It is the duty of every Communist to join every trades-union and to fight from within for the class programme and for revolutionary leadership and policies." The "Red" Trades-Union Congress was also to be revived, re-organised and strengthened. Lastly, leagues should be set up for the revolutionary political education of the young workers and for the purpose of drawing trained young workers into the ranks of the Party, and it was thought that it might be advisable to form militant workers' leagues and workers' parties in the provinces for similar purposes. These organisations were to be controlled by a core of well-trained and class-conscious Communist workers, and it was hoped that they would be able to remove "another weakness of the Communist movement to-day—the inability to develop and extend illegal underground forms of movement, struggle and organisation". "The Communist cadres", the thesis remarked on this subject, "have considerable experience of open mass work, but they still have to learn to devise methods to combine legal and illegal activity. Without this it is impossible to organise and bring the toiling masses to revolutionary battles. Without this it is impossible (under present conditions) to create a mass Communist party."

The United Front in Operation. Meanwhile, at the end of 1933, K. N. Joglekar, S. S. Mirajkar, S. V. Ghate and R. S. Nimbkar had regained their liberty. After a brief preliminary survey of the situation, in the course of which all but Nimbkar spurned the olive branch which M. N. Roy's disciples held out to them on condition that they renounced the Communist International and all its works, the three first-named decided to throw in their lot with their former colleagues and to place their services at

Dr. Adhikari's disposal. Mirajkar was immediately given a position of responsibility in the new central committee. Joglekar has already been revealed in the guise of a sort of envoy plenipotentiary from Dr. Adhikari to the provinces. Ghate's activities did not bring him into prominence until he performed the current duties of the secretary of the central committee while Dr. Adhikari was in prison in the summer of 1934. Within two months of their release, this group decided that the time had come to measure their strength and they accordingly committed their now augmented following to a temporary alliance with M. N. Roy's adherents for the purpose of exploiting the general dissatisfaction which then existed in industrial circles in Bombay. The actual history of the strikes which resulted from these combined efforts is less interesting than the insight which they gave into the working of the Communist tactics of the united front. But a knowledge of the former is an unfortunate prerequisite to a proper understanding of the latter and it is necessary, even at the risk of anticipating the history of the "Roy" party's achievements, to set forth the salient facts of the strike wave which swept India during 1934.

The Strike Movement in 1934. The question of a strike was first mooted at the annual session of M. N. Roy's section of the All-India Trades-Union Congress which was held at Cawnpore at Christmas. Feeling that labour conditions in Bombay warranted some more practical demonstration of sympathy than the customary resolutions, the Congress decided to hold an All-India Textile Workers' Conference in Bombay to consider the feasibility and desirability of organising a general textile strike in the near future. A month later, at the end of January 1934, the conference assembled and was attended by members of both the "Roy" and "official" parties from the Bombay Presidency, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces, as well as representatives from Baroda and Bengal. After some haggling and mutual recrimination the two groups jointly resolved to organise, within the next three months, a country-wide strike of all textile workers. The Council of Action set up to take charge of this scheme contained representatives of both parties, and its members were instructed to tour their provinces forming strike committees, preaching the doctrine of a

general textile strike and collecting funds in support of it. The campaign began at once and was conducted with vigour and enthusiasm in most of India's cotton-manufacturing areas. A strike which occurred in a cotton mill in Sholapur early in February seems to have taken the Council by surprise, but the orthodox Communists lost no time in dispatching their agents to the locality and succeeded in extending its scope, and probably its duration as well. Although this premature outbreak cannot have been as welcome as if it had occurred two or three months later, it provided, nevertheless, an admirable war-cry for the campaign in other parts of the country. Two other premature and short-lived strikes were engineered, one in Cawnpore and the other in Ajmer, before the Council held its final decisive meeting in Ahmedabad on the 8th April. The 23rd April was selected as the date for the outbreak of the first preliminary strike in Bombay. This was to be followed by the declaration of sympathetic strikers in textile mills in other parts of India on "May Day", which is usually celebrated by Communist demonstrations the world over. Efforts were redoubled as "May Day" approached. Meetings were held at more frequent intervals (there were, for instance, no less than eight separate meetings in Bombay City on the 15th April); processions were organised with greater regularity; and the spate of leaflets increased. On the appointed day the strike began in a modest way in Bombay, only four mills, employing about 5,500 men, being involved. During the next few days, however, the response to threats and inveiglements exceeded the organisers' most sanguine expectations and the situation rapidly deteriorated until, on the 27th April, there was virtually a general strike in progress. Only two mills of any importance were unaffected and the number of workers on strike on that day was approximately 70,000. The strike in Sholapur was still in progress, and the workers in these two centres were joined by the 1st May by others in Nagpur and Delhi. For various reasons, including the prior arrest of the principals in some places, simultaneous action which had been arranged in a number of other areas failed to materialize. The Delhi operations, serious while they lasted, were conducted by Shib Nath Banerji assisted by another of the Meerut prisoners, but they came

to a speedy end when it was found that the police would not permit the violent intimidatory methods by which alone the strike was enforced. Less drastic measures in the Central Provinces were at least partly responsible for the prolongation of the dispute in one group of mills till the end of June and for its extension to another group of mills in Nagpur. The local authorities at first had resort to the Criminal Procedure Code and arrested R. S. Ruikar and two of his fellow-workers as a preliminary to proceeding against them under section 107. They were forthwith released on bail, only to resume their activities with renewed vigour. When they were rearrested a few days later under the temporary provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1932 (and were, on this occasion, refused bail), the strike in this second group of mills immediately collapsed. Meanwhile, the strike in Bombay had increased both in scope and intensity. Neither magisterial orders, nor arrests for breaches of the ordinary law, nor the dispersal of processions and meetings, nor even occasional resort to firing in emergency, seemed able to stem the tide of violence and secret intimidation both in the streets and in the workers' homes. It quickly became evident that the ordinary law was inadequate to cope with the situation and it was, therefore, decided to call into action the Bombay Special (Emergency) Powers Act under the provisions of which fourteen leading Communist agitators including Joglekar and Mirajkar were summarily arrested and imprisoned on the 29th April. But Dr. Adhikari remained—now a veritable dictator behind the scenes—and others were found to take the places of those who had been removed. There was an instantaneous but short-lived improvement in the situation, after which the strike resumed its violent course, and it was not till the end of May, when Adhikari and thirteen more of his confederates had also been arrested and all meetings and processions in Bombay City had been prohibited, that its mad career was checked. The situation at once improved and, although a few sporadic cases of violence still occurred, the workers signified their appreciation of the steps taken to safeguard their lives and liberty by flocking to the mills to resume their work. The employment figures leapt from 27,500 to 41,500 within a week; in a fortnight the number at work was 60,500; and by the 23rd June, after two months of

warfare, the attendance was 85,000, considerably more than it had been before the strike began.

The Political Aspect. One of the most depressing aspects of the disorders briefly described above was the indication which they gave of the amount of harm which a handful of trained and experienced Communist agitators can do in a comparatively short space of time. The strike movement in 1934 provided more than one instance of a couple of such agitators, newly arrived in an industrial area, having worked up the most unpromising material to a pitch of excitement wherein they abandoned their work on the flimsiest of pretexts, only to return to it sadder and wiser men when the original instigators were removed. Indeed, in every case referred to above, the removal of a comparatively small number of these professional strike-mongers was followed by a return to saner methods and, in most cases, by a speedy demonstration of the fact that the workers' real desire was for employment regardless of its terms. There is abundant evidence of the fact that, when Dr. Adhikari and his followers first entered the joint Strike Committee in January 1934, they had strong hopes that the strike for which they agreed to work would be only one of a chain of disputes all over India embracing almost every branch of transport and industry. M. L. Jaywant, the enthusiastic party organiser in the Central Provinces is known, for example, to have been strongly of opinion that it was essential to include railwaymen in the strike in order to prevent the transport of "blacklegs and the police (and also the army) to the affected areas to undo our work". He pressed these views upon his colleagues at the time, but for tactical reasons they were not voiced at the joint conference. Joglekar, too, made several speeches in the course of his all-India tour which suggested, in veiled terms perhaps, that only a general strike could bring salvation to the working classes. But these open expressions of opinions generally held and of hopes widely entertained in orthodox Communist circles were the exception rather than the rule. Generally speaking, M. N. Roy's partisans found no real cause for complaint.

It was in other less reputable ways that the true-red Communists sought to work their will. Although there

may have been ample justification for some of the fifty or more disputes which occurred in Bombay in April, the strike which P. C. Joshi brought about in the Muir Mills in Cawnpore in March was a glaring example of maladroit application of the Communist policy of transforming individual strikes into a general political strike. The workers in the Muir Mills, who were induced to strike in sympathy with their brother workers in Sholapur, are the best paid in Cawnpore and had no possible cause for complaint, and the only result of this senseless stoppage of work was the loss to the Party of the services of an enthusiastic worker (Joshi was sent to jail for another two years) and the complete failure of Cawnpore to rise to the occasion when the "general" strike began seven weeks later. The strike in the railway workshops at Ajmer, which deprived the Party of another youthful enthusiast—R. D. Bharadwaj—is another case in point. But the more experienced leaders in Bombay committed no such indiscretions. Not till the strike was well under way did they reveal their true purpose. The Strike Committee's twenty demands to the employers, made after nearly four months' agitation and more than a fortnight's direct action, contained more political aspirations than pleas for the economic improvement of the workers' lot. When, moreover, the leaders of the *Girni Kamgar* Union (of M. N. Roy's persuasion) showed signs of wishing to make terms with the owners, the "official" Communists, prompted as usual by Dr. Adhikari, who had by that time usurped control of the Strike Committee, resolutely opposed a compromise on any terms whatever; the strike continued in full force, despite efforts to call it off, until Dr. Adhikari was himself arrested about a fortnight later. Finally, having ousted their rivals from control, the Communist Party of India openly set about the promotion of a general strike, as witness a typical leaflet signed by the Strike Committee's secretaries and issued on the 23rd May appealing to the railway, dock, municipal and tramway workers in Bombay to join the strike, or another, which appeared the next day under the seal of the Party itself, exhorting the workers of all industries all over the country to enter the lists against capitalism and imperialism. The tactics of the united front had outlived their usefulness; the Communists must

now come out into the open as the sole champions of the working classes. Reviewing their activities in retrospect some four months later, the Bombay "official" Communists claimed that the strike had rehabilitated the Party with the textile workers, had increased the membership of the Party and had had very beneficial results in Sholapur. The Young Workers' League had also benefited very considerably and had had to open two new branch offices to cope with its increased membership.

The Educational Aspect. It has already been shown that the Communist Party of India had been urged from all sides to press on with the work of "filling the fighting cadres"—an objective which could only be achieved "in the process of actual struggle by the formation of strike committees and revolutionary peasant committees". As Dange succinctly put it in his defence statement at Meerut, "the strike period is the only period when the cultural level of the workers can be raised on a mass scale. . . . One lecture on any subject in the strike is more valuable than a month in a night school." The orthodox Communist members of the Council of Action must have realized that anything in the nature of a general strike was quite out of the question but they were insistent, nevertheless, that the strike must not be postponed. An army cannot become efficient without periodical manœuvres and the coming strike would give valuable practical experience to both leaders and workers, even though it might fail to produce more immediate concrete results. When trouble broke out in Bombay, therefore, the strikers, urged on by these extremist leaders, became bolder as their number swelled and as the promised fruits of success seemed to come closer to their grasp. From jeering at, and abuse of, the police on the first two days they progressed to somewhat timid stoning, and finally indulged, on the fourth day, in murderous attacks on the police and loyal workers, which were only repulsed by resort to firing after a number of policemen had been seriously injured. Much was made in Communist circles of the fact that the fighting on the 27th April was carried out under the leadership of the workers themselves, and it was felt that this was a great step forward in the training of the proletariat. When the Strike Committee was reconstituted after the arrests on the 29th April, actual

strikers were admitted to it and so the training went on under expert supervision. Lectures and home talks and the study of specially prepared pamphlets were supplemented by practical exercises in actual conflict with the police, until the arrest of the instructors at the end of May put an end to the course of training. Some weeks later, when the strike was just over, the secretary of the Young Workers' League issued a Mahrathi leaflet in which he took to the League's credit the lion's share of the preliminary propaganda and the actual fighting with the police and proceeded to examine the causes of the success of the operations. "The reason is", the leaflet ran, "that the members of the Y. W. L. are being given instruction in the revolutionary Communist philosophy of Marx and Lenin. . . . The members of the Y. W. L. are not only given theoretical instruction but practical training also, and it is for this reason that they were able to give such a good account of themselves in the general strike this year." Nor was the "practical training" confined to assaults on the police; for, on at least one occasion, the strikers were incited to storm mill premises, and one leaflet which was issued in the course of the strike by the Communist Party of India exhorted the workers of all industries to collect arms and ammunition and to use them in the fight against the police and the military. The leaders in Sholapur, acting apparently on advice from Bombay, went one step further. An explosion which occurred in Poona at the end of April was found to have been caused by the carelessness of a science student while he was preparing bombs to the order of one of the Communist leaders of the strike in Sholapur. (The leader in question had, incidentally, visited Bombay two days before he placed the order.) This incident caused the police to make a critical analysis of several recent explosions in Sholapur, and it was discovered that no less than seven of these had been patently intended to terrorize loyal workers. Bombay and Sholapur were not, of course, the only places where violence on the part of the strikers was directly attributable to Communist causes. The strikes in Delhi and Nagpur provided other outstanding examples.

Activities in Bengal. The Calcutta Communists held aloof from the strike, but they were by no means inactive. The continued existence, in spite of the com-

promise at the end of 1933, of three main groups hampered their work to some extent, but they managed to take charge of several small strikes which occurred in the spring of 1934 and to extend their influence to three or four hitherto untouched areas on the banks of the Hooghly. They also made efforts to start an Anti-Imperialist League, which would, it was hoped, provide a point of contact for the various discordant groups whose means differ but who have amongst their common aims the disruption of the Empire and the formation of some kind of Indian Soviet State. Such a body would, of course, serve a useful Communist purpose—much the same as the Workers' and Peasants' Parties were designed to serve in the days before the Meerut case was instituted. As it happened, however, their efforts in this direction brought nothing but tribulation to the Party. Mr. Gandhi was then in the midst of his all-India tour on behalf of the depressed classes and was planning to spend some weeks in the districts of Bengal. There was much open opposition to this proposal from educated Bengalis and the time seemed opportune to launch the anti-imperialist scheme. It was natural in the circumstances that the new organisation should be called the "League Against Gandhism", but this name aroused the antagonism of a few influential orthodox Congressmen. Several rowdy meetings were held, tempers rose, and at the end of a month, nine or ten of the Party's most prominent leaders, including Abdul Halim and Shamsul Huda, found themselves involved in criminal proceedings which engaged a considerable part of their attention for some weeks to come. Their press service was also disorganised by official demands for security, but despite these handicaps they managed to produce a considerable amount of cyclostyled literature, while one of their number was continually occupied at Jamshedpur in Bihar assisting in the organisation of Tata and Co.'s employees. When his activities became too blatantly aggressive, the Bihar Government externed him from the province, but he was quickly replaced by another "comrade" from Calcutta who was similarly expelled in due course. Of the activities of the other Communist groups in Bengal the tale will be told at a later stage, and I also reserve the history of Communist activities in the Punjab for special treatment in a subsequent chapter.

The Proscription of the Communist Party of India. It was at this juncture that the Government of India decided that the Communist Party of India must be notified as an unlawful organisation under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 (as amended in 1932). The various activities described above had made it quite clear that the Meerut prisoners had no intention whatsoever of abandoning the practices for which they were prosecuted and in which they publicly gloried when they made their so-called defence statements before the Court of Session. It was obvious that they proposed rather to profit by past mistakes and to perfect, with Moscow's specialist aid, an organisation whose construction had been interrupted by official action in 1929. With a view, therefore, to impede the progress of this dangerous movement the Government made a careful survey of their legal armoury. The sedition section and that which penalized the promotion of class hatred had been put to good use in some parts of India, but the restricted interpretation which had been placed upon their meaning by certain High Courts had seriously limited their effect in other provinces. Certain of the temporary special emergency powers which the Legislatures conferred upon the authorities in 1932 had also been of use, but something more seemed still to be needed and, as there was ample justification in law for notifying the Communist Party of India as an unlawful organisation, it was decided that this course should be taken. It was recognized at the time that it would be difficult to obtain convictions under the Act, but it was hoped that the moral effect of the knowledge that the Government was declaring war on Communism root and branch would not be inconsiderable and that, by driving the Party still further underground and by laying its offices, funds, records and literature open to seizure (at any rate, till the end of 1935), this action would render more difficult the Party's main task of organising the country for an armed mass rebellion. This notification was quickly followed by another issued by the Punjab Government in respect of five Communist associations with their headquarters in that province. The Madras Government also declared unlawful the Young Workers' League in Madras which again began to rear its head when Amir Haidar Khan was released. Some months later, too, the Bombay Government followed

suit with a notification which declared unlawful five of the more important orthodox Communist organisations in that Presidency, amongst them being the "Red" *Girni Kamgar* Union, the Young Workers' League and the Marxist Students' Club.

Secretive Methods. This action on the part of the authorities emphasized the need for the organisation of an underground branch of the Party and, although Dr. Adhikari was exiled, on his release from jail, to a small town in the south of the Bombay Presidency, it was not long before he found ways of communicating his advice on this all-important subject to those whom he had left in charge. A sample of his work is the suggestion that the Politbureaux of both the central committee and each provincial committee (consisting in each case of three really capable and experienced "comrades") should work entirely underground, unburdened by any form of open work. The bureaux' main responsibilities would be the issue and secret circulation of reports, resolutions, decisions, etc., made by their respective committees, the production of party newspapers and the development of what Adhikari described as "the technical apparatus". This last task consists of the provision of a number of secret courier services between the centre and the provinces, between the provinces themselves, and also between provincial committees and their subordinate organisations. Unknown and unmarked members of the Party should be chosen for this work which must be carried on with the utmost secrecy, for it was only through a network of such "technical arrangements" that the central authority and the provincial committees can keep alive their contact with the cells at work in the various branches of transport, industry and agriculture. It is too early yet to say what measure of success will attend these efforts, but a beginning is known to have been made and it seems pertinent to recall (as Dr. Adhikari also did) the case of Amir Haidar Khan who had completed nine months' underground work and had established the framework of a courier service to Bombay before he attracted the attention of the Madras police.

Philip Spratt's Reappearance. It is unnecessary to discuss the measures by which the various provincial

committees sought to negative the effects of the Government's attack. The case of Calcutta is typical ; there, Abdul Halim issued instructions that unmarked members of the Party were to be chosen from the intelligentsia and were to confine themselves entirely to secret activity amongst the working classes and to the holding of private study circles. The real leaders must take no part in open activities. It was while schemes of this nature were under consideration that Philip Spratt's term of imprisonment came to an end on the 6th September, and, as he had considerable practical experience of this type of work both in Bombay and Calcutta, his counsel was much in demand. After a short stay in Allahabad, he spent a month in Calcutta, not only advising the local branch of the Communist Party of India on organisational questions but in endeavouring also to compose differences which still existed in spite of several earlier efforts to dissipate them. He was very little more successful in this latter direction than his predecessors had been and he eventually departed for Jhansi and on to Bombay, leaving S. S. Mirajkar (who had joined him meanwhile) to try his hand. In Bombay he attended a number of secret and open meetings before leaving, on the 14th November, for Wardha, where he is known to have had interviews with Mr. Gandhi on three successive days. Thereafter, he proceeded to Madras to hold brief intercourse with members of the Young Workers' League and other socio-Communist groups in the Presidency. Throughout his tour he spent a great deal of time in a patient study of the situation, in the course of which he showed considerably more deference to the views of the "reformists" than is usual amongst orthodox Communists in India. His tour seems to have had a threefold object—the preparation of an impartial report for the World Congress of the Communist International which was to be held in Moscow early in 1935, the removal of obstacles in the way of an all-India anti-imperialist united front, and the reorganisation of that side of the Communist movement which he represents. Despite Dr. Adhikari's earnest appeal to his colleagues not to endanger Spratt by engaging him in active work, his activities resulted in his detention under the Bombay Special (Emergency)

Powers Act on the 18th December. And there we must leave him.

Financial Assistance from Abroad. Spratt was not the only prominent Communist who was moving about India at this time. S. S. Mirajkar and K. N. Joglekar were particularly active in this respect. The inner purpose of their visits to various industrial centres is a matter mainly of conjecture, but it was somewhat disquieting to find them able to undertake expensive tours on behalf of a party which had no visible income. Nor was official misgiving in this regard in any way relieved by a number of vaguely indefinite, but very persistent reports to the effect that they and others of their kind were carrying funds from Bombay to other centres. These reports also spoke of the regular receipt in Bombay and Calcutta of considerable sums from abroad, of mysterious agents who brought them by sea, of elaborate arrangements to forewarn the Indian party of their advent, and of careful secret planning so to dispose of them on arrival that the authorities should be unaware of their existence. Although there has been no direct corroboration of these accounts of what was going on, there is, on the other hand, no reason to doubt that they have a substantial element of truth in them. To say the least, they raise a strong presumption that the arrangements which were in force prior to 1929 have now been resumed at the instance of B. F. Bradley, who is said to have visited Moscow during the summer of 1934 expressly to tender advice on this and kindred subjects. If this be so, the Communist Party of Great Britain is almost certainly acting once more as the Communist's intermediary in this, as in other matters.

An Indian Section of the League Against Imperialism. That this is likely to be the case, is demonstrated in a variety of other ways, some of which (*e.g.*, the dispatch of Communist literature of international importance from London instead of from Continental cities) have already been mentioned. Another indication is the recent formation in London of an Indian section of the League Against Imperialism, "for the purpose of establishing some form of organisational link between Indians who are opposed to foreign rule in

India". This new section (and others in the process of formation in two or three important English and Scottish cities) are to be under the control of the British section, of which Bradley assumed charge immediately on his return from Russia. The new section's literary efforts have shown beyond doubt that its views are in complete harmony with those of its parent body and also with those of the International Secretariat, whose headquarters are also in London. Its appearance—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, Bradley's assumption of his new rôle of Secretary for Indian Affairs—resulted in a marked increase of Communist activity in Indian circles in London and a consequent broadening of the field of recruitment to the ranks of the Communist Party of India.

Other Forms of Assistance. It is not, however, the Comintern's practice to place all its eggs in one basket. Despairing, no doubt, of those who were in control of Indian Communist affairs during the period of degeneration, the Comintern entered, as I have already suggested and as I shall show more amply in a subsequent chapter, into an alliance with another ready-made Indian organisation—the Sikh *Ghadr* Party. I only mention this fact here because for some time past the *Ghadr* Party has been the Comintern's main—but not its only—point of contact with India, and at least one member of this Party, a trained product of the Eastern University, has been sent back to India to accomplish the task of establishing liaison between the groups in Bengal and the Punjab. Amongst other recommendations which passed from Moscow to India by this channel, I may mention the opening of Communist schools in convenient Indian centres and the inauguration of a seamen's courier service in co-operation with the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers. Nor has Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi, been idle. From his new headquarters in Moscow, he has continued to interchange correspondence with Indian Communists, often through Iqbal Schedai who seems to have taken his place in Paris. His letters have been full of the usual advice and instructions, the result of consultation with "some of my friends interested in your work", as to the correct political line for the Party's programme. "Your organisation pays

little attention to illegal work and illegal forms of organisation", he wrote on one occasion. "You even go so far as to give the names of all your prominent workers in an open letter. A revolutionary organisation cannot afford to do that". But I must return to the path from which I have strayed in pursuit of a side-issue.

A Second Meeting of the Provisional Central Committee. At the end of 1934, using the crowded annual session of the Indian National Congress as a cover for their movements, the members of the provisional central committee assembled in Bombay. The casualties which had resulted from the previous year's campaign had been made good by nomination or co-option. S. S. Mirajkar had, for instance, taken Dr. Adhikari's place as secretary and Ajoy Kumar Ghose, a prominent Communist in Cawnpore, had succeeded P. C. Joshi, while the Committee's representativeness had been enlarged by the inclusion of a Madrassi member. The main business before this meeting was the consideration of reports from all provincial branches of the Party with the exception of that in the Punjab. These reports are of some interest as revealing the Party's own measure of its achievements during 1934. Briefly, they are said to have disclosed an increase of the Party's membership from a score or so at the beginning of the year to about 150. There were also said to be a hundred or more candidates awaiting election. The Party's field of activities had been extended to cover the three main railway systems, the entire textile industry in the Bombay Presidency and a part of the jute industry in Bengal and the cotton industry in Cawnpore. A dozen or more study circles had been started for workers and educated youths. Very little work was being done in "reformist" unions, but the United Provinces and Bombay parties had established contact with the Congress Socialist Party. Except possibly in the Punjab, from which province no report was forthcoming, only a small beginning had been made with the work amongst the peasantry. All the basic documents had been translated into Mahrathi, but little progress had been made with translation into other Indian languages. Another important subject which was discussed was the question of negotiations between the "Red" All-India Trades-

Union Congress and M. N. Roy's more virile branch of the same organisation. There were those who advocated the dissolution of the "Reu" Congress and the issue of orders to all its affiliated unions to seek affiliation with M. N. Roy's body in order to work from within it. This suggestion did not, however, find general acceptance and a decision was reached that the "Rec," Trades-Union Congress should only agree to negotiate if overtures came from the other side ; there should be no suggestion that the orthodox Communists were at all interested in such an agreement.

Plans for the Immediate Future. The Committee also looked into the future, and sketched out a plan of action for provincial organisations to follow. They were directed to reorganise themselves and to start work on the basis of the new constitution of the Communist Party of India which had appeared in draft form in the *International Press Correspondence* of the 11th May 1934 and which the meeting had finally accepted with a few minor amendments. The draft statutes are printed as an appendix*. The committee are also said to have laid down the following as the main tasks for the immediate future : (1) the recruitment of Party members on a wide scale ; (2) the formation of factory cells in industrial centres and peasant committees in rural areas ; (3) "fraction" work in reformist unions and the formation of new unions in industrial centres where they do not exist ; (4) co-ordination of work on the railways ; (5) the preparation of a series of provincial theses for a plan of work amongst the peasantry ; (6) the formation of anti-imperialist leagues ; (7) the translation of Party publications into provincial languages ; (8) the formation of more study circles covering a wider area ; and (9) the publication of an English organ at the centre and of Party newspapers in appropriate vernaculars. On the eve of the New Year, K. N. Joglekar visited Lucknow and, under the kindly shelter of an inaugural conference of the All-India Press Workers' Union, explained to Communists at work in Northern India the implications of the Committee's decisions and the methods by which they could best be

carried out. And so ended twelve months of unremitting toil in the face of adversity, of continual warfare with constituted authority, and on untiring effort to form a powerful Party with its roots underground and its branches ultimately spreading to every Indian locality where man earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow or the manipulation of his pen—twelve months at the beginning of which B. F. Bradley had remarked, after a short survey of the situation, “Taking everything into consideration, I think things are going very well.”

Note.—Since the paragraph on page 206, entitled “Financial Assistance from Abroad”, was printed, the names and movements of three of the “mysterious agents” have been discovered; one of them, Mrs. Constance Mary Sargent, was apprehended in Bombay with an ingeniously devised receipt in her personal baggage. The amount of money, a very considerable sum in the aggregate, which these agents have brought into India during the past two years is also known.

CHAPTER 19.

OVERTURES TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS.

Mukunda Lal Sircar's Efforts. Meanwhile, the more important section of the All-India Trades-Union Congress (which M. N. Roy's followers had captured at Calcutta in July 1931) had also increased in strength under the able tutelage of R. S. Ruikar,* its president, and Mukunda Lal Sircar, its general secretary. Both of them had, however, been committed to jail at the end of 1932 and the early months of 1933 witnessed a consequent decline in this body's activities. By the end of April, both had been released and, although the Congress had elected G. L. Kandalkar as its president in the meanwhile, Sircar resumed his duties as secretary. He and Ruikar visited Bombay and were given an enthusiastic welcome, and Sircar then busied himself with securing more affiliations and with arrangements for the issue of a weekly bulletin on labour affairs which was to be sent free to all unions in India. As the time for the annual session drew near, he also suggested the preliminary holding of provincial labour conferences, but he was unable to bring any of his schemes to completion because he was again arrested and imprisoned for complicity in terrorist activities in the Madras Presidency.

Some Results. In the brief time at his disposal—exactly three months—Sircar laid the foundations for more solid work by his successor in office, with the result that, by the end of 1933, Roy's followers had consolidated their position in the A. I. T. U. C., and had secured the affiliation to it of some forty labour organisations of more or less importance. They had also set up machinery in three provinces for obtaining a modicum of peasant

* Ruikar's present position is somewhat obscure. It is very evident that he does not see eye to eye with many of Roy's most ardent disciples and it is known that Roy himself entertains doubts of his loyalty.

support, but the Party's chief output of effort had been towards luring Jawahar Lal Nehru—by then an openly confessed Communist—and others of his way of thinking into the fold.

Work in the Trades-Unions. On the trades-union side, Roy's party claimed "to have spread the gospel (as Kandalkar later described it) to places where the working-class movement had not even been heard of a few days back". Their field of operation covered the cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Nagpur, while a foothold had also been obtained in Assam, the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa and also in several of the smaller towns in Bombay and the Central Provinces. The support which they had obtained included that of the labour unions connected with three important railways while a fourth, though not officially affiliated (owing mainly to financial considerations), was nevertheless a definite supporter of Kandalkar's organisation and actually selected Ruikar to represent it at the annual session in Cawnpore. The Madras railways and the B. B. and C. I. Railway were, however, still in what the Party calls "reformist" hands—those of the moderate trades-union leaders, represented by Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. V. V. Giri.

The Pursuit of Unity. Although with the arrest of M. N. Roy it seemed evident to the unbiased observer that a stable platform of unity between the various trades-union bodies at work in India was an impossibility, yet efforts were still made to devise a working formula. Ruikar seemed prepared to go further than most of his colleagues in pursuit of this ideal. In particular, he recommended that the thorny questions of foreign affiliation and representation at Geneva should be decided by a declaration that the All-India Trades-Union Congress would not affiliate itself to any body outside India but that any of its members might go, as individuals or as representatives of their particular unions, to the meetings of the League of Nations. Even these concessions failed to attract moderate opinion to the annual session of the A. I. T. U. C., however, and the position in this respect remains very much the same today as it was when Roy was imprisoned in 1931. Still smaller are the hopes of a

satisfactory compromise with the "official" Communists, whose "penetrative tactics" are at present causing consternation and alarm amongst the more thoughtful of Roy's adherents.

The Annual Session at Cawnpore. When the All-India Trades-Union Congress met at Cawnpore on the 23rd December 1933, it had a large agenda before it. Jawahar Lal Nehru's presence had a special significance in view of the strenuous attempts which were then being made to win over the left wing of the National Congress. The resolutions passed were not of outstanding importance, except in so far as they gave birth to movements which later had important results. Sympathy was expressed with all workers and peasants throughout the world and, more especially, with Indian textile workers (whose battles were to be fought by the Bombay *Girni Kamgar Union*), jute workers in and around Calcutta, labourers in the Meerut sugar mills, Tata & Co.'s employees at Jamshedpur, hawkers in Bombay, railway servants generally and the unemployed. The panacea for all their ills was said to be a general strike followed, in India's case, by country-wide agitation on the basis of Roy's demands and the eventual setting up of an ideal state on the Russian model. To facilitate this an all-India political party was to be formed with the ultimate object of capturing the Indian National Congress and all its propaganda machinery. Sub-committees were appointed to draft proposals for the constitution of this new party and further to discuss the question of a general textile strike.

The Textile Strike. It has already been shown that the All-India Trades-Union Congress was primarily responsible for the strikes which broke out in a large number of cotton mills in different parts of India in April 1934, and it seems unnecessary to recapitulate the history of the events which led up to them or of the disorders which resulted therefrom. It became obvious long before they ended that Roy's minions had called into being forces which they were quite unable to control and that the "official" Communists were leading them into deeper waters than they could afford to dabble in without the cloak of pure trades-unionism being washed from their backs. It was comparatively easy for Shibnath Banerji, in Delhi, to retire; the removal of M. L.

Jaywant saw the end of pure Communism (and, therefore, of riotous behaviour) in Nagpur ; but a retreat in Bombay was a matter of no small difficulty. I have already shown how Roy's followers on the joint Strike Committee made earnest endeavours at a comparatively early stage in the proceedings to call the strike off and to negotiate with the owners for as favourable a settlement as possible, and how Dr. Adhikari's influence prevented the success of these efforts. The next step (taken after Dr. Adhikari's imprisonment) was the expulsion of Roy's followers from the committee by a narrow majority of votes. This final step indubitably cost Roy's disciples dear and it will probably be a long time before they again enter into a compact with those who thus brought about their undoing.

The All-India Socialist Party. The proposals for the formation of a separate political party did not mature until the beginning of April, when a number of R. S. Ruikar's followers in the Central Provinces and a few representatives of the " Roy " party in Bengal, Bombay and the United Provinces assembled at Jubbulpore to hold the inaugural meeting of the All-India Socialist Party. An idea of the purpose which it was intended to serve may be gathered from what Ruikar wrote on the subject of the presidential speech with which Dr. Charu Chandra Banerji, of Calcutta, was to open the proceedings. " The speech should advocate complete independence and later on a workers' and peasants' *raj*. It should support the tactics of a Shivaji, a Tilak, a Das* and a Lenin. We simply can't advocate Gandhian tactics. . . . At the same time let it be a covert attack on Gandhism which will not alienate the public." In short the Socialist Party was to fulfil for the A. I. T. U. C. much the same functions as the League Against Imperialism does for the Communist International and its sections ; it offered and invited, on terms of implacable hostility to British imperialism, co-operation with those discontented elements in the Indian National Congress who were seeking an outlet for their indeterminate feelings of dissatisfaction with the bathetic outcome of the civil disobedience movement. Ruikar's speech played upon these feelings and came very

* The late Chittaranjan (Deshbandhu) Das, the Bengali leader.

near to the ideal which he had outlined. He attacked "the religious-minded Gan̄chi" and advocated, not civil disobedience but a general strike, as the surest means of destroying capitalists, landlords and native princes. The new Party stood for the destruction of British imperialism, of which these three classes were the mainstay. Russia had shown the way and it was for India to follow her lead. Although the demands postulated in the resolutions, were possibly less radical than those contained in "official" Communist documents, yet they were such that no one who derives income from landed property could possibly countenance them. If they are read in the light of the speeches and writings of M. N. Roy and Jawahar Lal Nehru, to one or both of whom all the speakers owe allegiance, they have only one meaning—the usurpation of landed property or the divesting of vested interests. The proceedings of this and other meetings of less importance which were held collaterally made it abundantly clear that Ruikar and those for whom he spoke are Communists in all but name, or, as Dr. Banerji put it in his presidential speech, "If we cannot accept the Third International at the present stage, we can far less think of having any connexion with the Second International."

A Review of the Year's Achievements. Towards the end of 1934, the executive committee of the All-India Trades-Union Congress held a meeting in Calcutta which was attended by representatives of some twenty affiliated unions in Bombay, Calcutta, Cawnpore, Meerut, Jamshedpur and other smaller places. Harihar Nath Shastri, the new president of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, was chairman. The Committee first reviewed the activities of the Congress since the annual session in Cawnpore. These included the formation of six new unions, the capture of one old one and the inauguration of the All-India Socialist Party. The committee was of opinion that, in spite of "increasing repression which was making all trades-union work practically impossible", the T. U. C. had gained definitely in organisational strength. It had set up a permanent office in Calcutta to co-ordinate the activities of the different trades-unions under its control and was gradually reassuming its former position as the central leader and organiser of the trades-union movement in the country. Future

needs were next considered. Amongst them were an extension of activities to industries and trades where labour had not been organised, a country-wide protest against so-called repressive measures (including the notification of the Communist Party of India as an illegal body), and the mobilization of the working-classes for an attack on the "reactionary leadership of the Indian National Congress". Advantage was taken of the presence of so many foreign "socialists" in Calcutta to hold a general meeting of the All-India Socialist Party. This Party claimed to have established itself firmly in the United Provinces and Bengal since its inauguration the previous April; branches had been formed in Cawnpore, Lucknow and Gorakhpur and strong nuclei existed in Bombay, Nagpur and Jubbulpore. A committee was thereupon formed to spread the new gospel in places where it had not been heard thitherto.

The Principles of Communist Opposition. It seems necessary at this juncture to examine a little more closely the standpoint of M. N. Roy's disciples *vis-à-vis* the Communist International. The fundamental objection of all Opposition groups to the present leadership of the Communist International is that the present Soviet system is based on Russian interests rather than on those of the international proletariat. They accuse it of having set aside the theoretical and strategical principles imposed by Marx and Lenin by not giving the various sections of the Communist International a sufficient say either in the management of the organisation as a whole or in the local application of the Comintern's resolutions. Those groups with which M. N. Roy has formed an alliance (the Brandler-Thalheimer group in Germany and the Lovestone group in America) still look for such reform in Moscow as will enable their differences to be healed, and are strongly opposed to Trotsky's proposal that the various Opposition groups should be combined into a Fourth International. Writing in the *Workers' Age*, the organ of the American group, in 1933, M. N. Roy said on this subject, "The idea of opening up a new shop at the present time is not only silly but it is an inexcusable crime. Only the monumental egoism of Trotsky could conceive of such a thing today." In short, Roy is one of those who (to adapt one of Lovestone's recent

speeches) prefers logic to ritualism, realistic analysis to phrase-mongering, free discussion to blind acceptance of dogma, and who regards decentralized control, admitting of the expedient of adaptations to local conditions, as a *sine qua non*.

Roy's Particular Differences. As has already been suggested, the differences between the Communist Party of India and the followers of M. N. Roy really resolve themselves on close analysis into a theoretical argument as to the precise interpretation in India of Stalin's assurance that the Communist International would lend its support to all subversive movements which are "national in form but proletarian in essence". Whereas Roy wishes to see the Indian National Congress and its subsidiaries included in this definition, those at present in control in Moscow refuse to admit that any movement in which Mr. Gandhi has a hand is anything but a *bourgeois* attempt to mislead the masses into serving capitalist interests. These latter views were echoed by the Communist accused at Meerut on whose behalf R. S. Nimbkar said: "It is a fundamental mistake to consider either the non-co-operation movement or the civil disobedience movement as revolutionary. They, of course, both contained certain revolutionary elements and possibilities of development, but these have not been allowed to develop. Petty *bourgeois* politicians have actually led them and have been extremely careful to restrain their followers and prevent them from becoming revolutionary." Roy himself would have admitted as much but, whereas these accused preferred to leave these "petty *bourgeois* politicians" to their own devices, or at the most to denounce them on occasion, it has been Roy's consistent aim to work both inside and outside the Congress in order to detach from it as many of the "revolutionary elements" as possible and to exploit the "possibilities of development" to the full. In short, therefore, the ultimate objective of both the Indian parties in question is the same, namely, the establishment of the rule of the proletariat on the lines of a Soviet Republic. Both are more or less agreed, too, on the expediency of an appeal to nationalist fervour and racial hatred in colonial countries such as India, where undisguised Communist sentiments may make little appeal

by themselves, or may even antagonize public feeling. They differ only in their methods. The "official" Communists prefer the direct route and scorn to make a secret of the fact that they propose to seize political power by means of an armed uprising, for which the fomenting of strikes and intensive agrarian agitation are to prepare the way. Roy's programme, on the other hand, is more gradual and more insidious. Its basic aim is to make the fullest use of whatever advantages existing organisations can offer in building up, step by step, strong groups of workers and peasants. His message to the masses of India is less harsh and less Utopian, more in consonance with their every-day surroundings, than that of his one-time colleagues. But let no one misunderstand Roy. He is no more averse to the use of mass violence than the very Comintern itself. Unlike the "official" Communists, he does not flaunt this weapon in the face of authority nor place it in the forefront of his programme, but his secret writings from 1920 up to the present day make very apparent the value which he attaches to this cherished occupant of his political armoury.

The Leavening of the National Congress. An earlier chapter contained some details of Roy's personal work inside the Congress before his arrest and also referred to Kandalkar's belief that there was growing disillusionment amongst the Congress rank and file which he was making it his business to intensify and lead into fruitful channels. These efforts continued without much apparent success until Mr. Gandhi showed signs of indecision at Poona in July 1933. This had the very effect which Kandalkar and his colleagues desired. The Congress split up into numerous discontented groups, all opposed to Mr. Gandhi's hesitating policy but none able to provide a generally acceptable substitute.

Jawahar Lal Nehru's Co-ordinating Influence. It was at this juncture that Jawahar Lal Nehru was released from jail. Amongst his first actions was the publication of a series of articles in the nationalist press which gave clear indications of the workings of M. N. Roy's influence upon him. His "socialism" had become "redder" than it was six years before when it first became an "immediate issue" with him. His new text on

each occasion, whether in speech or essay, was, "Divest the vested interests", and the strain of both grew steadily more radical until he finally admitted in public print that he was a Communist. But he explained that he had no desire to foist his views on the Congress by underhand means. All that he wished to do was to induce the Congress to make up its mind about socialism so that he and others who thought with him might know where they stood. If it were a fundamental policy of the Congress to preserve the large landowners and princes, then there could be no place for him in it. At the Cawnpore session of the All-India Trades-Union Congress he sketched the similarity and need for co-operation between the nationalist and labour movements, each of which played a part in the many-sided struggle against British imperialism, though the labourers and peasants would have the additional task of ensuring that power did not ultimately pass into the hands of landowners, capitalists and estate owners. He also visited Calcutta in an endeavour to provide the numerous youth organisations and socio-Communist bodies which exist in Bengal with a simple formula, having hatred of the British as its basis, which might find acceptance by all or most. But his enthusiasm was his undoing; he overstepped the law and was committed to prison for two years on a charge of sedition.

The First Fruits of Peaceful Penetration.

Nehru's writings and utterances were followed by a quickening of activity in many parts of India, of which Roy's followers were not slow to take advantage. At the end of 1933 draft proposals for the formation of a Congress Socialist Party made their appearance in Bombay, bearing upon them the unmistakable imprint of M. N. Roy's influence. Based on pure socialism, in the evident fear of frightening away those Congressmen who might still be fearful of the word "Communism", they provided an attractive alternative to the usual appeal to national sentiment—a movement which aimed at the removal of the economic and social disabilities of the masses of the people. Whereas, it was said, the former method had patently failed to draw the masses into the struggle for *swaraj*, the latter could not fail to do so. The immediate programme of the Party was to be one of strict

socialism, ranging from the nationalization of key industries, railways and banks and State control of foreign trade to the provision of a minimum wage and an eight-hour day. But to this is eventually to succeed, at a time of generated economic crisis, a very much more full-blooded programme which will embrace a country-wide "no rent" campaign, a general strike of all the workers, the social boycott of all anti-national elements, the boycott of British concerns and of such Indian concerns as have dealings with them, the establishment of councils of workers and peasants and of the middle classes to lead the strike and to assume power, and finally, on the success of this struggle, the convening of a Constituent Assembly elected by the classes that participated in the struggle for freedom. This happy issue is to be achieved, and the transition from the earlier to the later programme to be effected, by the organisation of the workers in different trades and industries, by the creation and extension of peasant societies, youth leagues, volunteer organisations and other militant bodies which will provide the manpower required in the national struggle, and by a variety of other endeavours of the same kind. The immediate plan of action, in so far as the Congress was concerned, was to enter into all Congress committees and to attempt conversion by suasion, accepting the discipline of the Congress in those matters wherein participation in the mass struggle is not abandoned nor reversion to constitutionalism threatened.

The Emergence of the Congress Socialist Party.

This first attempt and another which followed it a few months later were unsuccessful and it was not till May 1934 that the All-India Congress Socialist Party came into actual being. The inaugural conference was held at Patna at the same time as a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and was attended by about a hundred delegates from all parts of India. The actual resolutions passed are of comparatively small importance. The Party once more declared its objective to be the formation, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly, of a socialist State whose constitution must be based on the following main principles: the transfer of all power to the producing masses; the socialization of the principal industries and public utility services; the elimination of

the Princes, the landlords and money-lenders ; the redistribution of land to the peasants and the ultimate collectivization of all agricultural processes ; and adult franchise. The conference had been preceded by an amazing amount of hard work on the part of M. R. Masani, a young barrister from Bombay, and Jai Prakash Narain, the Party's organising secretary, and other lesser lights ; and the fact that they were able to induce thirty-five members of the All-India Congress Committee to vote against a resolution which Gandhi himself moved bears adequate testimony to the success of their efforts.

A Party Within the Congress. One of the resolutions passed at the inaugural conference emphasized the Party's desire to remain within the Congress and either convert the present leadership to its own views or, failing that, to induce the rank and file to find new leaders. There were many occasions in the course of the next few months when the Party's leaders were sorely tempted to abandon this fundamental principle, but they stuck tenaciously to it in spite of the taunts and sarcasm of orthodox Congressmen which so enraged the rank and file that they demanded the immediate severance of connexion with the Congress. It may be mentioned that agitation on these lines was at first fostered by some of M. N. Roy's followers ; this ceased when it became known that he himself was strongly opposed to such a course. "Having brought the dissatisfied and disillusioned elements outside the Congress", he pertinently enquired, "what do you propose to do with them ?"

Rebuffs from Congress Leaders. It was hardly to be expected that the Working Committee of the Congress would be unmoved by the challenge to their position which the rise of this new party involved, and a resolution, passed at Bombay in the middle of June, sardonically discouraging the presence in the Congress of those who indulged in "loose talk about the confiscation of private property and the necessity of class warfare", was a natural corollary. Mr. Gandhi, at first paternal and characteristically patronizing, showed later signs of some concern at the rapidity with which this schism was gaining ground in the Congress. From talk of the new party's "right and duty" to place its programme before

the Congress, he passed to reproachful criticism of its policy, which seemed to him "to ignore Indian conditions and to be based on the wrong assumption that there is necessarily antagonism between the classes and the masses". Later still he suggested that the socialists "of the right type" should take charge of the Congress—with the rider that he and his friends would see if they could continue to work under the new conditions. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, too, saw fit to launch an equally devastating, if less adroit, attack on those who were "cultivating public opinion against the Congress", and it became apparent by the end of July that those in control of the Congress organisation were making every effort to hamper the growth of the new party.

Brazen Impenitence. The first reaction to this ill-concealed hostility on the part of the Congress leadership was intense annoyance amongst the rank and file and a demand for immediate secession, but when this had been subdued, the Party's leaders sought to make of the attack a rallying-cry in their recruiting campaign. Thus, the Working Committee's original pronouncement was followed by an appeal to all Congressmen with a socialist bent to "accept this challenge" and to put forth their utmost energy to have this resolution rescinded and their own programme adopted by the forthcoming plenary session of the Congress. This was accompanied by a further enunciation of the Party's aims, which referred to the Karachi resolution* as "a step in the right direction taken by the Congress under pressure from Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru" and went on to say that "the resolution was a halting and self-contradictory statement" and that the Party proposed "to take the Congress much further along the same path". Another important, though less obvious, effect of hostility in high Congress circles was a sudden silence about the methods by which the socialist programme was to be enforced and the concealment of the Party's ultimate objective, mass rebellion, under the cloak of the "non-violence" of the Congress constitution. This change of tactics did not, however, escape Mr. Gandhi's vigilant eye, for, when asked for his criticisms of the Party's draft programme

* Appendix IV.

and constitution, he mentioned that he failed to find in them an acceptance of the Congress objective, the attainment of complete independence by legitimate and peaceful means. "If it is an intentional omission", he proceeded, "I can understand it; for your object seems to be far different from that of the Congress." But this draft became the accepted constitution of the Party a few weeks later and still contained no mention of the nature of the methods to be adopted.

Jawahar Lal Nehru to the Rescue. A temporary release from jail at the end of August gave Jawahar Lal Nehru an opportunity to uphold his followers and to reply to these attacks. He hotly condemned those members of the Congress hierarchy who, whether they knew anything of the subject or not, were perfectly willing to denounce and excommunicate people who happened to have made a special study of socialism and to hold certain views. No attempt had been made to understand those views which, it is notorious, are held by a very large number of the ablest and most self-sacrificing people in the world. They might be right or wrong but they deserved at least some understanding before the Working Committee set out to denounce them. One arresting sentence in this diatribe shows Nehru's views to be so nearly akin to that which I advanced in an earlier chapter* that I am tempted to quote it: "It is hardly becoming for a reasoned argument to be answered by sentimental appeals or by the cheap remark that conditions in India are different and that the economic laws that apply elsewhere do not function here." Nehru also made certain suggestions to his adherents, the most important of which was that only a mild socialist programme should be placed before the Bombay session of the Congress, as the full programme was likely to antagonize the many who had not studied socialism.

Preparations for the Annual Session of the Congress. Meanwhile the Party's organisers had been hard at work in the various provinces. Branches sprang up in important cities such as Ahmedabad, Benares, Delhi, Allahabad, Karachi, Poona, Calcutta and Patna. Jai

* *Vide* page 11.

Prakash Narain, the organising secretary, paid lengthy personal visits to various parts of the Central Provinces and Madras (and later also to Calcutta) which resulted in a quickening of local interest in the movement. In the United Provinces the number of district and sub-divisional committees steadily increased and socialist propaganda became a regular feature of some important extremist Hindi newspapers. Narendra Dev, the Party's president, concentrated his attention on Rajputana and the Punjab and Charles Mascarenhas, one of Roy's original lieutenants, spent a considerable time in Calcutta endeavouring to bring about a more complete alignment of the tenets of the All-India Trades-Union Congress, the All-India Socialist Party and the Congress Socialist Party. The next step was to secure the services of a dozen "comrades" to make extensive tours in the different provinces in order to inaugurate a country-wide campaign of propaganda, chiefly through lectures, to be in full blast when the Congress elections were being held. The policy at this stage seemed to be to absorb positions from which the Party could dominate Congress policy rather than to attempt the direct organisation of the masses. In the United Provinces, for instance,—admittedly an extreme case—of twelve leaders selected to supervise the reorganisation of Congress bodies in the various districts, all but two were avowed socialists. Then came the elections, the results of which showed that the Party had a substantial majority in the United Provinces and Delhi but was in a minority elsewhere. This fact did not, however, seem to discourage the leaders who were counting not so much on numerical superiority as on what they termed "an ideological victory".

The Trial of Strength at Bombay. This work finished, the Party's executive committee met in Benares at the beginning of October. Twenty-four delegates from ten Congress provinces attended, and final arrangements were made for the holding of an All-India Congress Socialist Conference in Bombay just prior to the A. I. C. C. meeting. The Conference began on the 21st October, the attendance being about 500 delegates and visitors. The business before it included consideration of the steps to be taken to secure a united front with M. N. Roy's

followers, and it was evident in more ways than one that both they and the "official" Communists were out to influence the proceedings each in its own particular way. Roy's disciples triumphed and the programme which the Congress Socialists eventually produced came very near to that which Roy has had in mind for a number of years past. The programme is printed as an appendix* and it will repay comparison with that which M. N. Roy sought to have passed by the Karachi Congress in 1931.† When the Indian National Congress began its work two days later, the socialists were found to have a voting strength of 60 or 65 in a subjects' committee which varied from meeting to meeting, but never exceeded 200. That the socialist policy would fail to obtain complete acceptance in the Congress proper was, therefore, a foregone conclusion even to its most ardent advocates. Not only was the Socialist Party in a numerical minority but it was without the additional force which Jawahar Lal Nehru's presence would undoubtedly have given to its attack. Despite these handicaps, however, the leaders marshalled their forces well and came near to winning minor victories on more than one occasion when the Working Committee were off their guard; but even so, their modest expectations of an "ideological victory" were largely unfulfilled. Their "mild socialist programme" was never even discussed; it was skilfully consigned instead, by a comprehensive resolution which stifled several other inconvenient attempts at insubordination, to the pigeon-holes of the Working Committee's office—"for disposal". Amongst the socialists' resolutions so dealt with was one which sought drastically to amend the Karachi definition of *swaraj*‡ to make it suit their own programme, another whose object was to place the Congress constitution on an ultra-democratic basis, and two more whose purpose was to refuse Indian participation in any future war and to deprive Indian Princes of their territories. The credit for this collapse must go mainly to Mr. Gandhi. For a time he was content to remain an "amused and unconcerned spectator" and to allow Rajendra Prasad, the president-elect, to tackle the problem in his own autocratic manner

* Appendix VI.

† Appendix V.

‡ Contained in Appendix IV.

(Nor were these latter methods unsuccessful—at least they won for Rajendra Prasad the good-humoured applause of all the parties present.) But when Mr. Gandhi perceived a growing note of confidence in the tone of the socialist speeches, he judged the crucial hour to have come. He then began to take a hand, and the socialist power waned.

An Outline of Future Activity. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that, when the Party's executive committee met after the conclusion of the plenary session, there was a general feeling that nothing of lasting importance would be achieved while Mr. Gandhi's personality dominated the Congress. It was resolved, however, that the Party should continue its work and should endeavour to consolidate what small gains it had been able to achieve. Four sub-committees were formed, consisting of about ten members each: a labour sub-committee to carry on anti-imperialist propaganda in industrial areas; a peasant sub-committee to perform similar functions in rural areas; a propaganda sub-committee to publish books and pamphlets on socialism and to work amongst students; and a "united front" sub-committee to negotiate with trades-unions and other labour organisations for amalgamation or, at any rate, joint action. Instructions on these lines were issued to all provincial branches, and the sub-committees started work at once. By the end of the year a working agreement had been reached with the All-India Trades-Unions Congress by the terms of which Congress Socialists would concentrate on those unorganised industries which were considered to be politically strategic, in an attempt to secure their affiliation to the A. I. T. U. C.* In spite of the great variety of agrarian conditions and the Party's relative inexperience of this type of work, it was decided to approach the peasant problem in a manner quite different from that which the Congress has hitherto adopted; it is to be "an economic approach", its purpose being to link up the political struggle with the present economic

* It is reported at the time of writing that a secret trial agreement has also been made with the "official" Communists, by virtue of which the Communists will be allowed to take part in all public meetings held under the auspices of the Congress Socialist Party, and *vice versa*. The agreement will be ratified or renounced at the end of three months.

struggle of the peasants and *vice versa*. Competent members of the Party will first undertake a tour of investigation, and, incidentally, of propaganda, to some or all parts of their respective provinces, with a view to acquainting themselves with conditions obtaining there and to discovering how best to produce a militant agrarian movement. As a result of the propaganda sub-committee's labours, the *Congress Socialist* (Calcutta) has become the Party's all-India official organ and arrangements for acquiring another English weekly,—the *Indian Socialist* (Bombay), and for establishing a Hindi weekly have reached an advanced stage. Tracts and pamphlets are also to be published both in English and Hindi, and the sub-committee has appointed a committee in England to carry on propaganda overseas. It is true that, despite these concrete results, the Party is still a top-heavy organisation having little or no contact with the masses of the Indian people, but there is good reason to believe that its main present objective is merely to build up efficient machinery and to keep it in running order, against the time when Jawahar Lal Nehru is re-installed as its controlling genius. Then, the leaders hope, will come the floodtide of enthusiasm, and only then will the wheels begin to revolve.

Roy's Promptings. Roy's influence on the course of this movement will have made itself evident in more ways than one, and it only remains to show how this influence was exercised. Although he has been in jail since 1931 he seems to have found no difficulty in writing and secretly circulating a series of letters of encouragement and instruction to his disciples and to those Congressmen amongst whom he and they are working. It is necessarily difficult, in such circumstances, to prove Roy's authorship, but it will be agreed that when the documents themselves abound in such phrases as, "on this point I went to the extent of disagreeing with the entire leadership of the Communist International" and "it is unfortunate that I am deprived of the opportunity of joining you in this fateful movement"—, the field of choice is very strictly limited. The writer's particular theme has been the imperative need for the new party to remain within the Congress and the effect of his repetition of this

essential policy may be gauged from the words of one of his most able and most devoted lieutenants—"The Benares discussions brought us directly to the question of Royism and the building up of the Party in the country. We were able to pick out good elements who will be with us before long. It is becoming increasingly clear that our party has to develop through the C. S. P. The danger lies in exposing ourselves. Congress socialism must be kept as such and must not be mistaken for Communism. . . . The Government has already sensed it and is exposing us to the frightened *bourgeoisie*, who will drive us out of the Congress. We have to be more cautious in the future in discussing about the question of our party."

"**Whither Congress ?**". Of the series of letters attributable to M. N. Roy, the first with which this narrative is concerned was a manifesto entitled "Whither Congress ?" which appears to have been written in April 1934. The writer begins with an attack on Mr. Gandhi who had, by his revocation of civil disobedience at the beginning of the month, thrown the Lahore independence resolution and the Karachi economic programme (poor thing though it was) to the four winds, and had thereby given one more demonstration of his readiness to bargain with imperialism for concessions which would benefit the Indian upper classes alone. Proceeding from this standpoint the author argued that every political policy is determined by some economic interest and that the Swarajists must necessarily evolve a programme totally antagonistic to the interests of the masses, whose sole salvation lies in "a mighty mass movement against foreign imperialism and national reaction". The Congress now stood at a crossing of the ways, he said, and the alternatives before it had been very aptly indicated by an important Congress leader as a relapse into liberalism or armed insurrection. The Mahatma's decision left no room for doubt that the present Congress leaders had chosen the safe road of relapse into liberalism. The rank and file of the Congress must, therefore, take immediate and unhesitating steps to turn this powerful body into "the organ of the new form of struggle, with a new programme, under new leadership inspired by a consciously revolutionary ideology". This done, there would be no objection

to Congressmen entering the legislatures under strict Congress supervision and control. Indeed, there would be several advantages in their doing so—speeches in the Assembly can be more effective than those outside ; elections present an opportunity of popularizing programmes ; the “ technical question of illegality ” can be more easily settled inside than out. Of more urgent importance, however, was the “ canalization of mass energy towards a definite goal ”. Mass discontent was there (the greater because of the deterioration of the economic condition of the workers, peasants and lower middle classes), and all that was needed was to turn that dynamic factor to political account and to stimulate it into “ an irresistible will to power ”, which must in its turn “ eventually develop into the final stage of armed insurrection ”. The preliminary stage should be composed of “ a variety of mass activity within the limits of established law ”, having as its basis the “ electrifying slogan ”: “ Land to the peasants ! Bread to the workers, manual as well as mental ! ” Such a war-cry essentially summarized the immediate economic demands of ninety per centum of the Indian people, even though it might bear different interpretations in different localities.

Other Documents. Another document in the same series, which seems to have been written at about the same time, was addressed to a sympathetic Congress leader in the United Provinces. The writer expressed his belief that Congressmen with socialist inclinations and with a programme of action practicable under the then conditions would command a majority in the Congress. He mentioned that he had constantly urged Jawahar Lal Nehru to force the issue with the present leadership, but Nehru, while agreeing with the principles of the proposal, had deferred action. Later he was arrested and the task had devolved on others of carrying on the work which he was forced to leave incomplete. He concluded with an appeal to all radical elements in the Congress not to let the name and prestige of the National Congress be used for sectional interests which would only harm the national welfare. Should Gandhi's policy of inactivity go unchallenged and be imposed upon the Congress it would wreck the movement. It is unnecessary to give particulars of all such

documents, and I will merely refer to the most recent, which was circulated amongst "the most genuine elements inside the left wing of the Congress Socialist Party" shortly after that party's defeat at the plenary session in Bombay. It began with a lengthy comparison of the real and present-day meanings of the word "socialism". The writer's particular brand scorned to travel the long road of reform by conversion, legislation, etc., and postulated the capture of power in the only possible way, namely, by armed insurrection. The only argument which would justify the existence of a purely socialist party working on more or less constitutional lines was that it educated, organised and lead the working class to improve their political and economic condition ; but this argument had no force in India, because any improvement in the condition of the Indian working class was only possible during a period of capitalist prosperity. The writer, therefore, objected to the title "Socialist Party" and urged that its name be changed either to "Communist Party" or, better still, "National Democratic Revolutionary Party". He wished his readers still to work in the Congress, however, and to influence, change and guide the policies of the Congress, so that eventually the left wing might come to predominate and the Congress to adopt the full programme of national democratic revolution. He concluded with the stirring appeal : "Save the Congress as the organ of militant mass action. Preserve it as a platform of the united anti-imperialist front. Develop it as the leader of a democratic national revolution." It is on these lines that the Congress Socialist Party is working today with their new-found allies beside them and M. N. Roy the evil genius in the background.

CHAPTER 20.

A DANGEROUS COMBINATION.

Personalities of the Early Twenties. In order to procure the requisite background against which to set the dangerous amalgamation of forces with which this chapter will deal, it will be convenient to intermingle with the narrative proper a few summarized extracts from that part of *Communism in India, 1924—1927* which Sir David Petrie devoted to the Communist movement in Bengal.

It has already been shown in Chapter 12 how Bengal was visited by Abani Mukharji, who came as a Bolshevik emissary from Chattopadhyaya's group in Europe, and by Nalini Gupta, who was sent by M. N. Roy. Both these visitors had past histories as members of the terrorist party in Bengal and were sent by Bengali revolutionaries in Europe to renew associations with their own countrymen. It will be remembered, too, that M. N. Roy himself was a terrorist pure and simple before he fled his country in 1915, and that Chattopadhyaya was advocating, in London, wholesale assassination in order to do away with British rule in India as long ago as 1909. Bengali terrorists come, almost to a man, from the respectable middle class of Hindus, who are not disposed to accept the Bolshevik creed as a whole, though they are ready enough to make common cause with almost any anti-British organisation, and particularly with one that is in a position to supply the sinews of war. Both Abani Mukharji and Nalini Gupta were, therefore, well received in terrorist circles in Bengal. Particularly was this so in the case of Abani Mukharji, who, despite his being branded as a spy by M. N. Roy, retained the confidence of an important group of terrorists till he again left for Europe early in 1924, when the news of the institution of the Cawnpore conspiracy case was bruited abroad. He is an exile to this day. Nalini Gupta, on the other hand, remained to be convicted at Cawnpore, and, although he was prematurely released owing to ill health in July 1925, he has never been prominent in Indian Communism since

his conviction. His place as Roy's agent in Bengal was taken for a very short time by Jiban Lal Chattarji, who was, within a few months of his appointment, arrested under Regulation III of 1818 on account of the very prominent part which he had played in terrorist activities in Bengal from 1917 onwards. These early manifestations of Communist activity amongst terrorists, of small importance in themselves, had in them the germ of the wider recognition amongst Bengali terrorists of the value of association with so powerful an anti-British organisation as the Communist International. Amongst those so affected was a certain Jogesh Chattarji, an important member of the *Anushilan* terrorist party of the Tippera District of Bengal, who had been confined from November 1916 till August 1920 on account of his terrorist propensities. His whereabouts were unknown from October 1923 until October 1924 when he was arrested in Calcutta on his way back from Pondicherry, whither he had been to visit the late Ram Charan Lal Sharma whose services to M. N. Roy and the Communist Party of India have already been remarked upon in Chapter 16.

The Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.

A good deal of information was subsequently obtained about Jogesh Chattarji which showed that, during most of the time that he was absent from Bengal, he was at work in other parts of India. Much of his time had been spent in the United Provinces, and the evidence obtained about his activities, then and subsequently, resulted in his conviction along with a number of terrorists from those provinces, chief of whom was Sachindra Nath Sanyal of Benares, in the Kakori conspiracy case on the 8th April 1927.* A document of which Jogesh tried to divest himself when he was arrested was later produced as an important item of evidence of conspiracy in that case. It contained the minutes of a secret meeting of terrorists at which it had been resolved, *inter alia*, "to preach revolutionary ideas and Communistic principles; and to gain the sympathy of workers and peasants". These papers also disclosed the existence in northern India of a revolutionary organisation known as the Hindustan Republican

* Jogesh Chattarji was sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment and is, therefore, due for release in the immediate future.

Association, and Jogesh Chattarji was later shown to have gone to Pondicherry to interview the late R. C. L. Sharma with the object of effecting liaison with those Communist elements which Sharma has been shown to represent.

This embryo organisation had done little more than establish itself in a few centres in the United Provinces, and most of its roots were discovered and pulled up by the Kakori conspiracy case. Some seem to have escaped, however, and the Association, which in 1929 significantly took to itself a new title—The Hindustan Socialist Republican Association—spread its tentacles to other parts of India and flourished where it took root. In the Punjab it produced Bhagat Singh, the notorious assassin who, in 1929, murdered Mr. Saunders in Lahore and attempted to kill certain members of the Legislative Assembly in New Delhi. He was hanged in Lahore in March 1931. It produced, too, the dangerous mixed gang of residents of the Punjab and the United Provinces who mined the Viceroyal train in Delhi at the end of the same year (1929) in an unsuccessful attempt to murder Lord Irwin. Its members were also responsible for many minor terrorist outrages in the United Provinces, Bihar, and Bombay. Such outrages were undoubtedly the manifestations of the general revolutionary movement inspired and largely equipped from Bengal, the chief “liaison officer” being Batukeshwar Dutt, who, as a member of the Bengal Workers’ and Peasants’ Party, took an active part in the organisation of labour trouble in Howrah during 1928 and 1929. He was convicted in June 1929 of complicity in the Assembly bomb outrage and sentenced to transportation for life. Although it can hardly be said that the series of outrages for which this group of desperadoes was responsible was the direct result of Communist inspiration, yet the circumstances of the Association’s inception gave clear indications of M. N. Roy’s direct and indirect influence upon it, and the behaviour of its members in the long-drawn trials in which many of them later became involved revealed the depth of their study of Communist theory and history. Though their action was bred of impatience to wear the martyr’s crown, their basic ideas were those of Marx and Lenin. With the removal of Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt and

of a number of others of their way of thinking in Bihar, the United Provinces, the Punjab and Sind, the movement in northern India quickly lost its Communist tinge and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, though retaining the same title, reverted to terrorism pure and simple. It was subsequently broken up by means of police action against it, and its activities have since been confined to the circulation of a few leaflets from time to time ; but there are present signs of a desire amongst the remnants of its membership to join hands with the " official " Communists in the prosecution of an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist programme.

The Genesis of Bengali Communism. Bengali terrorists have always been somewhat vaguely divisible into two generic groups which roughly follow the old territorial division of the province ; members of the *Jugantar* Party might be said, for general historical purposes, to be natives of the western districts, while membership of the *Anushilan* Party would connote residence in what was formerly Eastern Bengal. Those whose names have been mentioned hitherto belonged to the former group* and their work lay to a large extent outside Bengal. Meanwhile, however, the leaders of the *Anushilan* group were slowly coming to the conclusion that a handful of terrorists, however determined they might be, could never win *swaraj* for India unless they had the support of the mass of the populace. They were strengthened in this view by a glowing account of his visit to Europe which was given to them by a youthful member of their party named Gopendra Chakravarty. Chakravarty was a close friend of Jogesh Chattarji with whom he disappeared at the end of 1923 ; but whereas Chattarji remained in India, it subsequently transpired that Gopen Chakravarty had been dispatched to Europe by Nalini Gupta. He arrived in Hamburg in March 1924 under an assumed name ; he at once got into touch with known Communists ; he visited Moscow, probably in the company of M. N. Roy ; and

* Although Jogesh Chattarji began his revolutionary career as a member of the *Anushilan* Party, his subsequent connexion with the H. S. R. A. brands him as a member of the *Jugantar* Party during the period with which this narrative is concerned.

worked his passage back to India under another false name (Arjun Lal Misra) in June 1925. He then travelled slowly across India to Calcutta where he again got into touch with his old associates in the *Anushilan* Party and, filled with new-found enthusiasm, endeavoured to divert their activities into Communist channels. Like his precursors, he was well received and there followed reports of several ambitious proposals which included the dispatch of other emissaries to foreign countries to establish contact with Communists there. That efforts were made to translate these proposals into practice is shown by the fact that four young Bengali Hindus were subsequently arrested in two batches on different dates at the Shipping Office, Calcutta, whither they had gone disguised as Muhammadans to procure seamen's certificates. Later information left the clear impression that these four persons were emissaries who were being sent to Europe for training, and that, in addition, attempts had been made to send one or two others. Most of these schemes seem to have come to nothing ; but a few reached a more mature stage. One which came within the latter category was the formation at the end of 1925 of a " Depressed Classes Improvement Society ", for the ostensible purpose of social service, but, in reality, as a convenient cover for mass work. As the promoters of this scheme had no means of financing it unless they obtained a share of the Russian gold which they were led to believe was shortly to be poured into India in fabulous quantities, plans were made to send an emissary to England to arrange for the transmission of funds from the " Russian Labour Party in England ". The selected envoy seems to have been Akshoy Kumar Shaha of Mymensingh who left Calcutta in February and ultimately reached Moscow. He proved a broken reed, however ; having married a Russian wife, he settled down as a professor of science in Leningrad, in which capacity he remained in Russia till he was allowed to return to his Indian home at the end of 1932.

The Anushilan's New Programme. By the beginning of 1926, Gopen Chakravarty had re-established himself with the *Anushilan* Party, of which he had become a leading member. He had also secured the approval of some of the then leaders to a scheme which he had drawn

up for the reorganisation of the Party on lines agreeable to Moscow. It provided, *inter alia*, for organisation :

- (1) among students, who were to form unions and agitate to obtain control of the educational system ;
- (2) among labourers and peasants, who were to be educated in accordance with the usual Communist programme (this education was to be taken in hand by members of the terrorist party), co-operative banks being opened for the general benefit ;
- (3) in the Congress, which was to be used by members of the party as a cloak for their terrorist activities ;
- (4) on military lines, which included the formation of volunteer corps and athletic clubs to further military training and, also, agitation for the Indianisation of the army.

Attempts were also to be made to tamper with the loyalty of Indian troops and connexion was to be established with Moscow through the Soviet Consuls in Java, Persia, and China, through whose good offices money was also to be transmitted to India.

The Prosecution of the Programme. Organisation began forthwith under each of these heads. Students' associations were formed in several districts of Bengal ; co-operative banks were opened in Tippera and Faridpur ; the Congress in Bengal became more and more a cloak for revolutionary activities ; and a number of volunteer corps came into existence, notably that in Calcutta whose triumphal march, with its "General", Subhas Chandra Bose, riding at its head, through the northern streets of the City was one of the best attended spectacles connected with the 1928 session of the Indian National Congress. Chakravarty laid special stress on the revolutionary aims of the party and, to further these ends, he stipulated that each department must have a secret section. He did not, however, insist on the collection of arms until the manpower had been increased but desired that advantage should be taken of any opportunity to secure arms that might occur. His programme did not include incitement

to acts of terrorism, but it aimed at the gradual extension of Communism and of the influence of the terrorists over the masses, so that, when the time was ripe, a mass terrorist offensive could be undertaken.

The Communist Attitude towards Terrorism.

It can be shown in a variety of ways that Chakravarty's views on this subject were but the echo of orthodox Communist "ideology". From the very earliest days M. N. Roy had strenuously opposed individual terrorism as practised by Bengali terrorists. Writing to R. C. L. Sharma in 1924 he said: "We have not done anything about the automatic purposely, but I will see to it if you are so insistent. My request only is that nothing can be gained by this method of work. Look at our Bengal people. What have they gained by their recent stupidity? You cannot make a revolution so easily. First of all the mentality of the people—or at least a sufficiently large portion of it—is to be revolutionized. This cannot be done by stray pistol shots." A year later he published in his paper, *The Masses of India*, a manifesto to "the Bengal Revolutionary Organisation of Youth" from the Young Communist International. This manifesto pointed out that the liberation of India could only be effected by a revolution of the masses, which again could only come about by the combined efforts of the revolutionary intelligentsia of the proletariat; for, on the latter devolved the task of preparing the former. Individual acts of terrorism were deprecated for the sole reason that such acts defeated their own ends. It was emphasized that it was the masses that must be trained for the fight.

This dogma was loyally upheld by the Meerut prisoners both before and during the Meerut case. All were at pains to explain that there was a clear-cut distinction between the violence for which they stood* and the terrorist outrage of Bengali gunmen. No permanent advantage could be gained from sporadic murders and they, therefore, strongly deprecated political murders and anarchist outrages. I need not labour the point, however, for no less an authority than Joseph Stalin has put the question beyond all doubt in the following passage: "Let me

* *Vide* pages 144-5.

reiterate the fact, which should be known to every civilized human being, unless he is an utter ignoramus or a paid agent. Let me explain that Communists never have had, and never will have, anything to do with the theory and practice of individual outrages, that Communists never have had, and never will have, anything to do with the theory and the practice of conspiracies against individual persons. The theory and practice of the Comintern is based upon the idea of organising a revolutionary mass movement against capitalism. That is the true task of the Communists.”*

Other Bengali Terrorists. Amongst other Bengali terrorists who flitted across the Communist stage during the period covered by Sir David Petrie's book, Jatindra Nath Mitra, Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Dharani Mohan Goswami, and Soumendra Nath Tagore are worthy of mention. Jatin Mitra was dispatched by Nalini Gupta to Germany to learn the principles of Bolshevism and the cult of revolution, his expenses being borne by M. N. Roy. He returned to Bengal as Roy's *Anushilan* agent in 1925, but Roy's criticism of his work soon caused resentment and their relations with each other became strained, with the result that Mitra devoted his attention purely to the terrorist side of the party's work. From participation in a long series of terrorist activities, including deep complicity in a conspiracy with M. N. Roy and the notorious Rash Behari Bose (whose lieutenant he had been in his early days) to smuggle arms and ammunition into India from the Far East, Sachindra Nath Sanyal emerged in 1924 as the leader of the Hindustan Republican Association, already referred to, and was sentenced as such to transportation for life in the Kakori conspiracy case on the 27th April 1927. The several other sentences which he has been condemned to serve include another of transportation for life in the Benares conspiracy case in 1915, and he has shown himself during his brief spells of freedom from confinement to be a confirmed advocate of violence and a dangerous organiser of every form of revolutionary activity.

* *Leninism*, page 378.

Goswami and Tagore. It was Dharani Mohan Goswami's forthright advocacy of Communist principles which provoked a split in the *Anushilan* Party at the end of 1926. Forming a close alliance with Gopen Chakravarty, Goswami became a convert to Bolshevism, and of so high an order was his Communist evangelism that several of the younger members of the Party who came under his influence were impelled to break away from their old leaders, who, while they were quite ready to receive assistance from the Comintern, were not prepared to adopt all the tenets of Communist theory. At the beginning of 1927, this group, with Goswami at its head, was paying special attention to the organisation of students and labourers and one of its members had been introduced into the Bengal Jute Workers' Association at Bhatpara. In February the new group succeeded in obtaining seven seats on the executive council of the newly formed Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party in Calcutta, a committee of which Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmad were also members. Another member of the same committee was Soumendranath Tagore, a grand-nephew of the famous poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore, and a member of the Indian Communist Party. Soumendranath had been introduced to leaders of the *Anushilan* Party by Jatin Mitra and he rapidly attained considerable importance both as a revolutionary and as a Communist. There is information on record to show that he was concerned in conspiracies to assassinate officials on the revolutionary side, while, on the Bolshevik side, he was put into touch with M. N. Roy by Nalini Gupta, with whom he became very friendly. He left India in May 1927 on a definite mission to the Comintern to obtain funds for Communist work in India and to improve the connexion between the Communist-terrorist element in India and anti-British forces abroad. Roy's downfall a year later put Tagore out of commission and he spent several years on an island off the southern coast of Italy attempting to recuperate his failing health. He returned to India in January 1934, but does not seem to have joined any particular Party. Instead, he satisfied his craving for self-expression by reviving Muzaffar Ahmad's newspaper, the *Ganavani*, and by writing a book attacking the rule of the Nazis, at whose hands he had suffered expulsion from Germany. He has also published several

leaflets in favour of Communism, and has done, quite independently of any other Indian organisation, a certain amount of secret anti-imperialist propaganda amongst students in Calcutta and amongst seamen, both in ocean-going vessels and in inland steamers. The extent of this work or of its results is as difficult to gauge as is the real standing of the "Anti-Fascist and Anti-War League" which he inaugurated in August 1934.

Lasting Effects of Dharani Goswami's Influence.

Dharani Goswami's conversion to Communism proved to be a landmark in the history of terrorism in Bengal. From the end of 1926 onwards the penetration of terrorist bodies went steadily on, side by side with the organisation of those whose violent inclinations were of a less impulsive kind, who preferred to await the day when an armed mass rebellion was more possible of attainment. The formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in 1927 was followed a year later by the appearance of a Socialist Youth League of which the founder was the late Santosh Mitter, the head of another group of terrorists, who was shot by the police in the course of the disorders in the Hijli Detention Camp in 1931. With the inauguration of this League there were associated Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt, a prominent figure in the revolutionary history of Bengal, whose Communist tendencies date back to the autumn of 1920, at which time he was in Europe under Moscow's direct influence. Towards the end of 1928 came the Young Comrades' League with Dharani Goswami at its head and within its ranks a large number of terrorists, many of whom have subsequently been placed under detention on account of their revolutionary proclivities. The institution of the Meerut case struck a severe blow at all these organisations, but, when those who survived it had recovered from the shock, there sprang up in Calcutta an organisation known as the *Samyarak* Party consisting at first entirely of members of the old Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. This party gradually attracted to it a number of members of other terrorist groups in and around Calcutta and obtained control of six workers' unions in the City. It grew in strength until, in the middle of 1932, internal dissension, inevitable apparently in Bengali politics, severed its ranks. The immediate

point at issue was the question of secrecy. Badal Ganguly, one of the party's leading lights, acting on instructions from Bombay and Meerut (where a number of accused were on bail at the time), insisted that the party must go underground. Aghore Sen, another of the party's leaders, on the other hand, was equally insistent that salvation lay only in open propaganda. The two parted company, Aghore Sen to continue to control a depleted party and Badal Ganguly to join hands with the Indian Students' Group, the first of whose envoys had made his appearance in India a few months previously and of which more will be written at a later stage in this chapter.

Widespread Terrorist Acceptance of Communist Theory. Although there is no evidence that M. N. Roy established personal touch, during his brief sojourn in India in 1931, with any Bengali terrorists other than Subhas Bose and those who accompanied him to Karachi, yet it is a strange fact that it was not till then that his views began to find anything like general acceptance amongst members of the *Anushilan* and *Jugantar* Parties. Whether it was the result of Roy's influence or whether it was a more or less spontaneous reaction to current events it is difficult to say, but the early months of 1931 witnessed a remarkable manifestation of the Communist spirit amongst all classes of terrorists in Bengal. The change first expressed itself in a sudden thirst for knowledge of Communist theory and history on the part of *détenus* in the various jails and detention camps up and down the country wherever Bengali terrorists were confined. The leaders of both parties, *Jugantar* and *Anushilan*, lectured their following in the jails. The demands for Communist literature exceeded all bounds, and when it was refused by the authorities it was smuggled in by sympathetic extraneous hands. Many of the messages which *détenus* carried (sometimes verbally, sometimes otherwise) from one jail to another emphasized the importance of spreading the doctrines of Communism amongst the rank and file. Some leaders there were who demurred, but as time went on their following decreased and they themselves fell into line. Thus, in a comparatively short space of time, a considerable number of

known members of the *Anushilan* Party, and a fair number of the *Jugantar* also, had been weaned from ideas of individual terrorism to Moscow's doctrine of mass uprisings at the appointed time, and a beginning had been made in placing them under trained Communist leadership. The process is still going on at the present time, and the full effect of this continuous instillation of Communist theories into callow minds already filled with racial hatred can only become apparent when the 2,500 Bengali terrorists now under detention begin to trickle back to their town and village homes.

The Manifesto of the Hindustan Samyavadi Sangha. This metamorphosis had embraced so large a percentage of terrorists by the end of 1932, that Subhas Bose, fearing, no doubt, that he would otherwise lose control of the following by which he set such store, decided to subscribe to a Communist programme. At the beginning of October there appeared in Calcutta, a document which called itself "The Task Ahead (Manifesto of *Hindustan Samyavadi Sangha*)". Its authorship is variously ascribed to Jibanalal Chattarji, who, it will be remembered, was M. N. Roy's agent in Bengal for a very short period in 1923, and to Subhas Bose himself, but the preponderance of evidence points to Bose having drafted it himself. It consisted, for the most part, of a lengthy and one-sided recital of the political history of India in its relation to the larger world movement, interspersed with the conclusions which the writer wished to be drawn therefrom. At one stage much was made of the point that "non-violence, as it has been preached by the followers of Tolstoy, has no place in Hindu philosophy, while the teachings of the *Gita*—the central scriptures of the Hindus—are directly opposed to it"; at another of the need "to fight on every front—to attack every weak point of the enemy and . . . always to remember that the enemy's difficulty should be our opportunity". The collapse of the Burma rebellion was cited as an illustration of the need for the combination of the peasants and the townsfolk; events in Chittagong of how arms may be captured and of how, if the surrounding population are friendly, it is possible to evade arrest even if the whole countryside is "scoured by the military and

the police over and over again".* The conclusion reached in regard to the army that, was that, "as in Russia, the rank and file of the Indian section of the army are recruited from the peasantry and, if there is a peasants' movement in the country, even the hitherto loyal Indian Army may be infected through the mass movement appealing directly to their class interests, and one can expect the Indian troops to sympathize or fraternize with the revolutionary masses." The causes of the failure of Gandhi's non-co-operation movement were assessed under twelve different heads, the chief of which were, that it tended to make a fetish of non-violence, that it preached the amelioration of the conditions of the peasantry and labouring classes but failed to identify itself with their interests as against those of the landlords and industrial capitalists, and that it stood for an adjustment of interests and not for a radical transformation.

The Sangha's Programme. The *Sangha's* programme was nowhere clearly set forth but could be gleaned from certain "conclusions" which were drawn from time to time. Of these, two important passages may be quoted: "If the fight for freedom is to succeed certain things have to be done—

- (1) The army of occupation must be engaged so that it may not be able to concentrate its forces in one locality;
- (2) a section at least of the standing army must be won over to the popular cause;
- (3) the fight must be carried on simultaneously in the towns and villages;
- (4) the civil administration must be simultaneously undermined and paralysed;
- (5) a *de facto* people's government must be set up;
- (6) last, but not least, international recognition must be forthcoming for this *de facto* people's government. . .

How to fulfil the above six tasks is the problem which awaits solution at our hands."

* The arrest of Sarga Sen in Chittagong shortly afterwards should have done much towards shaking the foundations of this theory.

The other passage, which also speaks for itself, was the following : " The party organisation throughout the country should follow the lines of governmental organisation and should aspire to become in due course a parallel Government—a State within a State. The centralized party should have different departments working among different sections of the community. There should, therefore, be separate departments for (1) peasants, (2) labourers, (3) youths, (4) women, (5) members of the depressed classes, (6) a separate organisation for every minority community in the country, and (7) volunteers. Every discontented and exploited individual or group should be approached and won over to the popular cause. Patient work and persevering toil will be necessary for the purpose." (A previous passage had suggested the need for suborning the civil employees of Government in order to penetrate the intelligence system, and had pertinently asked, " How can the enemy be defeated unless you know beforehand what the tactics and plans of the enemy are ? "). In his own handwriting, Bose commended this programme, not only to his own dwindling following in Bengal but also to his friends in Bombay and Sind. Communist were to be preferred to terrorist methods. India's independence was still a long way off and terrorists (as they were then known) must be induced to hold their hands in patience against the time when the masses could be organised and armed for the final civil war and social revolution. Meanwhile, *Samya Sadans* (Houses of Equality) were to be set up in every district and sub-division. Later on, when sufficient men were forthcoming to work in a wider field, the party must " go to work among the labouring classes, cultivators, depressed classes and women on an intensive scale " and must seek also " to undermine internally the forces of the enemy ". Eventually would come the final blow to bureaucracy in all its forms—the engagement of the military on all fronts simultaneously and the wrecking of the civil administration.

The Madras Conspiracy Case. Shortly after this programme was circulated, Subhas Bose was allowed to proceed to Europe on grounds of ill-health and did not remain to see his scheme to fruition. It had, of course,

much in common with the programme which the Congress Socialist Party later evolved—indeed, there is reason to believe that M. N. Roy's doctrines provided the inspiration for both—but the new party's record of accomplishments was exceedingly small. Only in Madras did its activities bring it to official notice. Both Jibanlal Chattarji and Batukeswar Dutt were serving their sentences in the Trichinopoly jail where also Mukunda Lal Sircar, the then secretary of the All-India Trades Union Congress, was imprisoned.* During the latter half of 1932 these Bengalis held regular classes and lectured their Madrassi fellow convicts on revolutionary policy and methods. Bhagat Singh and his comrades were extolled as national heroes ; political assassinations and dacoities were justified on philosophical grounds ; instruction was given in the making of bombs ; and oaths of service to the motherland were administered to a large number of Madrassi political convicts just prior to their release. At the end of the year, Mukunda Lal Sircar communicated Bose's new programme to this group, and on his release a few months later, he lost no time in informing Bose of the enthusiastic reception of his scheme and offering his own support, and that of the All-India Trade Union Congress, to the *Samyavadi Sangha* then in the making. By the middle of May 1933, a large number of those who had fallen under these malign influences had regained their freedom, and all were pledged secretly to enlist most members. At this point a meeting was held in Madras at Mukunda Lal Sircar's suggestion, to review the position and to map out a plan of campaign. A proposal to call the party "The Hindustan *Samyavadi Sangha*" was eventually discarded in favour of the older and more high-sounding name "The Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, Madras Branch". The "Army's" object was declared to be the establishment of a socialist form of republic in India, by means of an armed rebellion. The party already possessed some revolvers and ammunition, secured from Pondicherry, and more were to be collected and paid for by the proceeds of a series of dacoities and robberies which were then planned. Organisers were appointed for different areas, party names were given and secret symbols were

* *Vide* page 211.

agreed upon for such words as "firearms", "assassinations" and "dacoities". The conspiracy ran for two months more, when it was brought to light by the arrest in Madras of two of its members who were about to proceed to the interior of the Presidency to commit an armed dacoity. Investigation revealed the fact that the new party's activities extended to no less than twelve districts, and resulted in the arrest of twenty-three of the more prominent of its members on a charge of conspiring violently to overthrow the Government. Twenty of them were eventually sent for trial by the High Court, of whom seventeen were convicted and sentenced on the 24th April 1934—Mukunda Lal Sircar (whom the judge described as "the brain behind the conspiracy") to four years' rigorous imprisonment, and the remainder for lesser periods.

The Absence of Official Communist Inspiration.

Roy's influence is so apparent in all this that it is unnecessary to seek the hand of Moscow in the sudden transformation which took place in 1931 and 1932, and which culminated in this attempt to establish a new revolutionary organisation. Nor, in fact, is there any suggestion that the hidden hand is there, beyond a brief note from the pen of Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi, of the Comintern's Eastern Secretariat, which appeared in *The Communist International* (a London journal) of the 1st February 1931 and which ran as follows:—"The programme prepared by the Communist Party of India will help it draw also to its ranks and round its banner that revolutionary stratum of the city petty *bourgeoisie* . . . which are engaged in terrorist attempts. The terrorist activities of these revolutionary youths have increased very much during the year." Moscow was, therefore, alive to the situation but it would be more than a little difficult to reconcile the vociferous condemnation which all her propagandist organs have persistently showered on Bose, not only as a Congressman but also for his trades-union activities, with the grant of her general blessing to a scheme which bore the stamp of Bose's authorship.

Moscow and Indian Students in England.

There is, however, one side of Moscow's present activities which is extremely germane to the present subject and

which falls to be dealt with at this juncture. Amongst the papers seized by the London police when they raided the headquarters of the Communist Party of Great Britain in King Street, Covent Garden, in 1926 were some which revealed the fact that the Communist Party of Great Britain had been making systematic attempts to infect Indian students at Oxford with Bolshevik ideas. Two non-Indian students were the agents employed in this task. These men attended meetings of the *Majlis*, a social and political organisation intended for the discussion of Indian affairs and the promotion of unity and comradeship amongst Indians at Oxford. Prior to the exposure of their plans, these agents had arranged for interviews between likely students and Shapurji Saklatvala, whose name needs no introduction. It was hoped that Saklatvala would be able finally to induce these youths to devote their lives to the promotion of Communism in India. The publicity which was given to these revelations in the English Press undoubtedly frightened the embryo Communists thus recruited, the majority of whom hoped at a later date to secure appointments under the Government of India ; and the Communist Party of Great Britain was made to recognize the fact that further efforts in this direction, would, for the time being, prove unprofitable. Working, as always, through Saklatvala, who, with Clemens Palme Dutt, had long since come to be recognized as the expert debaucher of Indians in England, the C. P. G. B. thereafter confined its attention to such ready-made Indian organisations in London itself as might reasonably be expected to yield a harvest of workers. Chief amongst them was the London branch of the Indian National Congress (another branch in Edinburgh was never exploited to the same degree), of which Saklatvala eventually gained control in 1930 after a struggle lasting a little over two years. His triumph was shortlived, however, for this "branch of the Congress" was disaffiliated by the parent body in India in August 1931 and thereafter died a lingering death. An Indian study circle formed by Clemens Palme Dutt and others early in 1926 proved even less of a success, and interest in it soon waned, while a completely innocuous Bengali Literary Society to which Saklatvala also turned his attention met with a similar fate.

The University Students' Group. Thus, thanks mainly to the good sense of the students themselves but partly to dislike of Saklatvala by the moneyed Indians on whose munificence the majority of Indian associations in London rely for their existence, the British Communists were compelled once more to turn to the universities. In July 1930 the Communist Party of Great Britain adopted a lengthy resolution on the subject of India, clause 7 of which read as follows: "The Party must work actively among the Indian residents in Britain (workers, sailors, students, etc.), and establish the best possible connexions with India through them." All the party's subsidiary organisations, such as the British sections of the League Against Imperialism, the Educational Workers' International, and the Workers' Welfare League of India, were thereupon harnessed to the tasks laid down. Persistent endeavours were made, mainly by Saklatvala and Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar (a law student from Mymensingh who had for several years been a full and active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain) to interest Indian students in the study of Communist theory. These efforts were rewarded in the summer of 1931 when a loosely-organised body known as the University Students' Group came into being. Meetings were held at irregular intervals in Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar's house in London for the purpose of abstract discussions on Communism. The group was originally composed of a dozen members; all came of exceptionally good stock; all but two were of unimpeachable character prior to their leaving India, ten were Bengalis, and eight were related in one way or another to loyal servants of the Crown. Others who have joined the group subsequently are of the same mental and moral fibre and have the same family associations behind them. Their natural friends and associates both in India and at the English universities are numbered amongst those who have entered or are about to enter the highest branches of the Indian services and the deliberate attempt to debauch these young Indians before they reached the age of discretion is, therefore, the more subtle and the more dangerous. A travelled Indian emphasized this danger a few weeks ago when he wrote as follows in an Indian newspaper: "With the progressive Indianization of the Indian Civil

Service the morale and efficiency of this historic Service have been on the wane. The same anti-British spirit in one form or another is noticed among the young Indian recruits to this Service. With the introduction of competitive examinations, all Indian successful candidates, irrespective of their cultural and political antecedents, have been taken in. . . . There are among them some who are closely related to politically disaffected persons ; such family ties and upbringing cannot conceivably tend to make these Indian Civilians worthy standard-bearers of English political and administrative traditions."

Marxian Training in Berlin. With the ground prepared by Dutt Mazumdar's theoretical training, invitations were proffered to members to attend a month's course in Marxian theory in Berlin and seem to have been accepted by about half the original membership. Papers seized in 1933 showed that the lectures had been in English and had embraced subjects as far removed from the study of Marxist theory as "the measures to be taken in India early next year (1932) in the event of the Round Table Conference failing to give satisfaction to the demands of the extremists, including organised terror, destruction of railway bridges, boycott of British goods, a campaign against Gandhi,* etc." Other subjects contained in the syllabus were the strategic importance of railways, roads and waterways, the vulnerability of ammunition factories and armouries, the history of peasant revolts (not only in India but also in China, Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies), and the best methods of promoting unity of action between townspeople and villagers. When intelligent students are set to study, under Communist supervision, matters such as these, there is only one conclusion to be drawn, and it must be accounted fortunate that the advent of the Nazi régime caused some dislocation of these arrangements for corrupting the sons of India's intellectual aristocracy.

The Return to India. Thereafter, these students began to drift back to India. Amongst the first to return were two, in particular, who lost no time in establishing touch with Communists in Calcutta. One again left India

* Cf. events in Calcutta described on page 202.

after a stay of two months, bearing for Moscow's consumption a report on conditions in Bengal ; the other, to whose orthodoxy and reliability as a Communist tribute was later paid by Dharani Goswami and others of the prisoners at Meerut, remained on in Calcutta, and under a suitable pseudonym began his work on the lines laid down in Berlin and, so it now appears, dictated by Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya from Moscow. In March and April 1932 this second trained agent dispatched to London a series of reports written in an ingenious cypher the purport of which was as follows : He had assumed control of the Workers' Party of Bengal (" a strong secret Communist party ") and had made considerable headway in the way of increasing the membership. Members of his party had established some kind of a footing in eleven districts of Bengal, one of Bihar and Orissa, and one of Assam, before the end of April. The peasant " rebellion ", which occurred at Hasnabad in the Tipperah district early in February 1932, was his party's work and he was giving harbour to Mukhleswar Rahman, a notorious agrarian agitator and one of the chief absconders in the case arising therefrom. The strength of Rahman's following in this district was 100,000 and a militant programme of action for an All-Bengal Peasant League had been drawn up and was shortly to be printed and copies broadcast in thousands. Similar propaganda was being conducted through two weekly newspapers. A tax-collector had been murdered at Phultala in the Khulna district. No funds had so far reached him and his activities were seriously handicapped on this account.

Activities of Trained Students. Copies of these reports were discovered in the course of a search in Calcutta at the beginning of May, and other documents recovered at the same time revealed the fact that, though much of what had been written was exaggerated, the existing nucleus in Calcutta had nevertheless been extremely active. Several secret meetings had been held and co-operative alliances had been formed with several small existing terrorist and Communist organisations whose combined field of operations covered five districts of northern and western Bengal and one of Bihar and Orissa. The rioting at Hasnabad had been indirectly

engineered by the group's agents who were actually harbouring Mukhleswar Rahman, the organiser of the "rebellion". The party's object was shown to be to educate the masses with a view to a combined rising at some future date but to eschew meanwhile methods of individual terrorism. All arms and ammunition were to be kept under the control of the central body for use at a time when a mass rising was feasible and advisable. This, it may be remarked, is precisely the line which Moscow's secret planning has been taking since the Executive Committee of the Communist International evolved its notorious manifesto in 1929. One of the "tasks" prescribed therein was the steady collection and storing of arms in a central *cache* and the training of the rank and file in their use and handling; instances of the execution of this policy are forthcoming from places as far apart as Jerusalem and Tokyo.

Continued Efforts. Fortunately, not all the original members of the group gave so good an account of themselves on their return to India. Several seem to have taken little or no part in the propagation of Communist ideas or the secret planning of rebellion. Of a score of such persons who are in the country at the time of writing, about half are giving no cause for official complaint (some from choice, others on account of parental vigilance); a few have obtained lucrative employment and have consequently confined themselves to secretly supporting the new party's aims in much the same way as U Su assists the Burmese "*thakins*".* Evidence of the activities of the London section is necessarily fragmentary, but what little becomes available in India from time to time reveals glimpses of a flourishing organisation in more or less constant touch with the Communist Party of Great Britain, holding frequent meetings for the study and discussion of Communist subjects and producing a steady stream of subversive literature which eventually finds its way to India through well-planned hidden channels. Its members seem to shun the light of day, and the occasions on which their activities come to public or official notice are few and far between; even articles in the group's official organ are presented to the public under

* *Vide* page 75.

noms-de-plume. It is clear from what is happening in India, however, that recruitment is still going on—particularly so since B. F. Bradley returned from Moscow in the summer of 1934—and that the net is being spread more widely so as to include Indian provinces not hitherto represented in the group's roll of membership—there is, for instance, already a substantial section of Muslim members from the United Provinces. It seems possible that this dangerous group is destined in the not very distant future to become Moscow's main "organisational and informational contact bureau" for her relations with the Communist Party of India.

A Clear Exposition of the Party's Aims. The December (1932) issue of this group's London organ, *New Bharat* (or *Indian Front* as it now calls itself), gave a particularly clear idea of its members' real intentions when it remarked with reference to the Sholapur rioting in 1930 and similar disorders which occurred at about the same time: "One of the lessons derived from the workers' risings is that when the workers break out in revolt and strike a blow, they strike unhesitatingly, decisively. They aim their blow at the very source of imperialist oppression, at its State apparatus. But imperialism still holds the day. It relies on its reserves of strength gathered during past decades. It will not be weakened until our national liberation movement is organised on the basis of a correct understanding of its tasks, draws in the widest masses of the country, leads boldly, and acts decisively. *The three requisites—organisation, a mass basis, and decisive action—must be fused together for the success of our revolution.* And this is the task of the party of the working class."

Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar and the Labour Party. In August 1932, the arch organiser, Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar, returned to Bengal, and at once busied himself with "rescue" work amongst those of his recruits who had fallen away since their return to India. For this purpose, and also in order to survey the possibilities of further development, he undertook a tour which led him to the United Provinces, Delhi, the Punjab and Bombay. He also dispatched a Punjabi member of the group to

Madras to establish touch with Amīr Haidar Khan who was under trial at the time. On his return to Calcutta, Mazumdar began to consolidate the pioneer work of those whom he had dispatched to India during the previous two years, and in April 1933 there emerged, as a result of his efforts, a new and separate organisation which called itself the Labour Party, Bengal, and which was intended to be the first of a chain of such bodies all over India.

This Party embodied many anti-imperialist elements in Bengal and had as its inner aim the formation of labourers into militant Communist groups. As, however, the direct preaching of Communism carried with it risks which were quite incommensurate with the results likely to be obtained, the Party hid its real object behind a façade of legitimate trades-unionism and set itself the task of winning the confidence of the labouring classes in and around Calcutta by giving sympathetic attention to their daily grievances. Mazumdar was no lover of spectacular heroics for their own sake, and it would be time enough to introduce Communist doctrines when a strong organisation had been built up by the above methods. Although his agents went to work amongst chemical workers, pottery workers, metal workers, railwaymen, jute workers and employees in match factories, as well as the student community, the Party's greatest success was in the Calcutta Port and Dockworkers' Union, which was registered under the Trades-Union Act in March 1934, and which ultimately declared a strike of dockworkers eight months later.

Work in Northern India. In July 1933, Niharendu paid another visit to Cawnpore to attend the inaugural conference of a United Provinces branch of the Party. This branch was placed in the charge of Dr. Mohammed Ashraf, whose Communist convictions owe their origin—as do those of so many others—to the early activities of M. N. Roy's agents in India. His extremist views were later confirmed by a prolonged visit to London in 1927, in the course of which he seems to have come more directly under the influence of both the Communist Party of Great Britain and of M. N. Roy himself. The new branch of which he was given command seems to have a peculiarly barren record of achievement, though it is, of

course, always difficult to assess the influence of a secret party until trouble actually breaks out. The inaugural conference was ill-attended, and subsequent efforts to extend activities to other parts of the province have met with some opposition and little apparent success. The old Workers' and Peasants' Party has been reconstituted, a few students' unions have been formed, some organisational work has been done amongst *tonga* drivers, brass workers and butchers in Moradabad, amongst railway workers in Lucknow, and also amongst the peasantry in a few parts of the province and in the neighbouring Indian States. The Party's representatives have also displayed a recent willingness to co-operate with both the Congress Socialists and the All-India Trades-Union Congress whose annual session in Cawnpore they attended in company with Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar. Equally ineffectual was a branch of the Party formed by Karam Singh Man in the Punjab at about the same time. It survived for a short time, but eventually merged into the somewhat loosely constructed association of Communist organisations in that province which the next chapter will show is under the nominal direction of a "Communist Board of Control", of which Karam Singh became the convener. It should be mentioned, however, that the Punjab's branch's leanings were towards the Communist Party of India rather than the All-India Trades-Union Congress.

Overt Communism. Very little was heard of Dutt Mazumdar's doings at the Cawnpore meeting in December 1933, and it appeared from the reports of surface activity which were received at the time that he had been badly snubbed when he asked for a say in the control of the All-India Trades-Union Congress. His underground efforts, however, appear to have been less unsuccessful. He seems to have impressed not only Rajani Mukherji, but also Charles Mascarenhas, with the strength of his position. Mascarenhas later visited Calcutta and, as a result of discussions between the three of them, a co-operative alliance was formed. Doubt was entertained at the time whether Mazumdar would still be able to play his waiting game; to organise in an open and semi-constitutional way before showing his real intentions and to win the confidence of the workers by solid trades-

unionist work rather than cloud their brains (and possibly frighten them as well) with abstract Communist theory. It seemed that several of those who had, by this new agreement, placed themselves under his wing would be disappointed if he did not provide the fireworks to which Bengali politicians had become accustomed. These doubts proved justified, and at the beginning of 1934 the Party began to shed its trades-unionist pretence and to come out more openly as the advocate of a revolution which should lead to a Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic on Russian lines. A typical example of this more blatant form of agitation was provided by the Tollygunge Workers' and Peasants' Conference which was held under the auspices of a local rice mill workers' union in January 1934. Mazumdar himself hoisted a red flag bearing the emblem of the hammer and sickle; shouts such as "Workers of the World Unite" were raised; Russian methods were extolled; and the workers present were urged to place their union on a "satisfactory basis". No political programme was given to them, however—advisedly so, it seems.

The Cause of Mazumdar's Downfall. The above example of the quickening of the tempo of Mazumdar's movement is also illustrative of another probable cause for his change of tactics. Not only had the general Communist *renaissance* which followed the release of the Meerut prisoners put the strident advocacy of Communist principles at a premium, but Mazumdar's motives had become the subject of criticism both in India and at his own headquarters in London. It was up to him, therefore, to prove his mettle and to set at rest any doubts there might be that his Communism was of a mild or inferior quality. To these causes were later added a feeling of desperation as he saw that the period of his liberty was drawing to a close, and the Mazumdar who precipitated the ill-judged dock-workers' strike in November 1934 was certainly not the calculating barrister who returned to India in August 1932 to complete, in a reasoned and orderly manner, the work which he had begun in London. His impatience brought him into continual conflict with authority and considerably hampered the development of his schemes. In May 1934 he was sentenced to nine

months' imprisonment for sedition ; he appealed to the High Court and, while still on bail pending the hearing of his appeal, he was bound down for a year under Section 107 of the Criminal Procedure Code ; he was one of those arrested and prosecuted in connection with Mr. Gandhi's visit to Calcutta in July* ; he was sentenced to a further year's imprisonment for a speech which he delivered in November ; he is involved at the time of writing in yet a third prosecution for sedition ; and only now, nine months after he was first arrested, has the High Court confirmed the first sentence passed upon him.

Dangers of the Future. The outcome of the dock-workers' strike which Mazumdar engineered was never in real doubt—the orthodox trades-unionists stepped in and the strike collapsed—and it may be said that the bathetic result of this first real trial of strength augurs ill for the future of Communism in Calcutta, a future in which Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar seems destined to play a very minor part. But it will be well to remember, without giving way to pessimism, that there are others of Mazumdar's capacity and ability who have been, and are being, trained to take up the work where he has left it, and that, even if only a small percentage of those who are recruited in London prove true to their training on their return to India, their number (and their mental and moral equipment) will still be adequate to the needs of the Communist situation, especially if their petty officers are drawn from amongst those 2,500 *détenus* who have already received a modicum of instruction in Bolshevik theory and practice and a good deal of experience of secret organisation on terrorist lines. Those recruited in London and those in Indian detention camps come from the same social strata and there are many signs that a number of the latter have joined hands with the former and are prepared to make common cause. It has not been possible in a work of this kind to trace all the complicated connexions between these two groups, but the cipher reports, Soumenendra Nath Tagore's activities amongst students, the appearance of one-time terrorists as collaborators in the formation of the League Against Gandhism, each possibly of small account in itself, are

* *Vide* page 202.

nevertheless all pointers of the general direction. Again, it may be argued that the hold which Bengali *bhadralog* can obtain over the large foreign element which goes to the making of "Labour" in Bengal is negligible; but this is not the lesson which the history of Gopendra Nath Chakravarty, Dharani Goswami and Gopal Basak has to teach. Nor, for that matter, is an amalgamation of Mazumdar's Labour Party with the Communist Party of India beyond the realm of possibility. It is true that the Communist Party of Great Britain (and, therefore, presumably Moscow) is mildly displeased with some aspects of the Party's activities, and that Spratt and Mirajkar failed to remove the causes for this criticism when they were in Calcutta in September last. It is known, on the other hand, that Mazumdar has accepted the political thesis of the Communist Party of India* and that the possibility of removing other differences of opinion is to be further explored when the opportunity arises. It is known, too, that the Comintern has been asked to give a clear decision on the Labour Party's exact position in Indian Communism, and if such a decision is given, it must naturally include an exposition of the relative merits of the programmes of each party, which may well prove to be the basis for a working agreement or even a complete submergence of mutual differences. What is true of Bengal is also true, to some extent, of other parts of India. In the United Provinces, for example, the overtures which Dr. Ashraf is making to the Congress Socialists gives cause for reflection on the possible results of an alliance between these two groups; so, too, there is cause for misgiving in the class of Punjabi who has been attracted, fortunately in small numbers at present, to Saklatvala's study classes in London and in the efforts which one of them (Karam Singh Man) is making in the direction of a united movement in the Punjab. Events in Singapore and Afghanistan† referred to in earlier chapters, and similar events in Japan during the past three years, have pointed the dangers attendant on Moscow's present recruiting policy, which is clearly calculated to produce a new class of leaders for the masses,

* *Vide* pages 191-4 for a working summary of this thesis.

† *Cf.* the activities of the German clique in the latter country.

a new hierarchy with inherited traditions of governance behind them, a paradoxical Communist aristocracy possessed of all the benefits which a western education bestows. The trials and troubles of the Indian labourer and the Indian peasant are manifold, and, given the time and the energy, such persons will not find it difficult to devise ways of winning not only their confidence but their blind and unthinking devotion, even to the extent of bringing them to subscribe to a programme of the type of Subhas Bose's, in which the peasants' task is to provide the "cannon fodder" for the troops while the *bhadralog* volunteers "wreck the civil administration."

CHAPTER 21.

SIKH MILITANCY.

The Kabul Centre. A considerable portion of Chapter 5 was devoted to the doings in Afghanistan of members of the *Ghadr* Party, whose headquarters are in San Francisco. It was said there that the degree of welcome which this nominally independent organisation accorded to the tenets of Communism was regulated at any given time by the state of the Party's purse. There was, moreover, an indication in that chapter that when Moscow's purse-strings were loosened, when Moscow's agents were tendering advice, and when Moscow's counsels prevailed, the Sikhs in Kabul presented a very much more formidable danger to India than when they were left to their own devices. This in itself would provide sufficient justification for including in a book on Communism a brief history of the *Ghadr* Party, but the pages which follow will also attempt to show how large a part the Communist International has played at one time or another in the growth and development of this dangerous Sikh association, and there will, I hope, be no need for an apology on this particular score.

The Origin of the Ghadr Party. This chapter will, therefore, be devoted to an examination of the *Ghadr* Party's activities from two other angles of vision—from San Francisco and from India. I cannot do better, as a beginning, than turn once more to Sir David Petrie's book, where it is written : " This movement, which is in the nature of a continuing revolutionary conspiracy recruited largely from Sikhs, was founded by Har Dayal in the United States of America in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the War. In 1914-15 many thousands of these rabidly disloyal emigrants returned to India, where their violent activities cost many of them their lives and still more their liberty. The movement was suppressed during the War but has never been stamped out, and there are still in the Punjab many returned Sikhs

whose bitter hatred of our rule predisposes them to join with eagerness in any conspiracy aimed at the subversion of our authority."

The formation of the *Ghadr* Party in San Francisco in 1911 naturally led to a considerable increase of activity amongst disaffected Indians working in California and neighbouring States. Shortly after war was declared in August 1914, serious attempts were made by the Germans, through the agency of the ubiquitous M. N. Roy, to turn this agitation into channels favourable to themselves, and the result was a very dangerous and a very widespread Indo-German conspiracy which the British authorities in England, India, and elsewhere were at considerable pains to counteract. Their efforts were substantially rewarded in more ways than one, amongst them being the prosecution of M. N. Roy and a number of the most prominent of the Party's leaders at San Francisco in 1915. Although there is very little of concrete result to show for this case, yet it forced many prominent conspirators into hiding in different parts of the world and, to that extent, dislocated the Party's schemes. The enemy's plots were thus rendered largely inoperative and, when the Armistice was signed, the Sikh movement again fell into the background. There it remained till the early days of 1926, when, to use Sir David Petrie's simile, the shutters were again taken down, money was plentiful, enthusiasm was unbounded, fresh members were joining, and activity was everywhere discernible.

By the end of 1927 so great had been the spread of the *Babbar Akali* spirit amongst Sikhs in Canada and America (as evidenced not only by the character of the speeches delivered at Sikh meetings, but by intercepted correspondence and by the large sums of money remitted to India on behalf of the families of the "martyrs") that the position had deteriorated to what it was when the *Ghadr* agitation was at its height. The *Pabbar Akali* cult connoted nothing less than the bitterest hostility to the British Government, backed by violence and bloodshed, and America and Canada had thus once more become a kind of forcing-bed for the production of the hot-headed and violent type of Sikh who provides such a ready tool in the hands of the Bolsheviks or others who wish to utilize

him. It was strongly believed, though there is no positive documentary proof of it, that the Soviet Government had come to the succour of the *Ghadr* Party in its extremity.

Early Communist Connexions. . There were several good reasons for this belief, quite apart from the important fact that by that time M. N. Roy was firmly established as the Comintern's adviser on Indian affairs. The fourth Congress of the Communist International, which met at Moscow in November 1922, had been attended by two representatives of the *Ghadr* Party in San Francisco, one being the late Santokh Singh as "a delegate from India", and the other Rattan Singh of whom mention has been made elsewhere. In May 1923, these two left for India, "financed to a moderate extent by the Communist International". Their mission was to work, at the Indian end, the schemes formulated in Kabul, which included the formation of secret revolutionary societies cloaked as communal organisations, the fomenting of trouble amongst the independent frontier tribes, the assassination of British officers, and the selection of young Sikhs for training in foreign military schools. The moment was opportune, for not only was the nucleus in Kabul in a flourishing condition, thanks mainly to Russian and Afghan assistance, but the *Akali* Sikh movement was then at its greatest intensity and feeling everywhere was at a high pitch. During a short sojourn in India, these two desperadoes succeeded in enlisting the help of a fair number of Sikhs and of Sachindra Nath Sanyal* and another Bengali before they were accounted for. Santokh Singh was arrested in suspicious circumstances in tribal territory at the end of the year and released on security, while Rattan Singh, deeming it wiser to break back, eventually found his way for a second time to America. His return to California seems to have coincided with the arrival there of another emissary from the Comintern, in the person of Evelyn Roy, M. N. Roy's American wife. Her presence in the States seems to have given a remarkable fillip to the moribund movement, and in Rattan Singh's case, also, it may safely be assumed that his illegal return to America in April 1925 was connected with this revival of activity

* *Vide* page 238 for an account of Sanyal's terrorist connexions.

and that he was acting at least as much on Moscow's as on his own behalf. His correspondence with his associates in Kabul and elsewhere placed the matter beyond all doubt. One such letter, written in December 1925, announced that fifty Sikhs were ready to proceed for work in Tashkent ; another, dispatched a month later, intimated the receipt of instructions from Moscow to send ten picked men for training in the Eastern University. In regard to the latter suggestion it is definitely known that five Sikhs sailed from Mexico at the end of January 1926 and proceeded via the Continent to Moscow. Some eighteen months later further evidence was forthcoming that the spirit of disloyalty amongst the Sikh population in California was being powerfully stimulated by Moscow for her own purposes and that an extensive recruiting ground had been opened up for the supply of disaffected Sikhs who were ready to serve under the red banner of Bolshevism.

Rattan Singh's Second Visit to India. Towards the close of 1925, Rattan Singh was arraigned before the American immigration authorities for having illegally entered the United States through Mexico. He absconded from bail however, and escaped to Russia whence he went on via Kabul to India, arriving on the frontier in July 1926. There is reason to believe that, at a comparatively early stage in the proceedings, the *Ghadr* Party became intolerant of M. N. Roy's control, and accordingly made independent negotiations direct with the Comintern. Thus it appears that one of the objects of Rattan Singh's second visit to India was to obtain from the *Akali Dal* a definite mandate for which the Comintern had asked. During a stay, which did not exceed six months, he visited several parts of the country, including Amritsar and Calcutta, and associated with known Communists wherever he went. There can be little doubt that he spent his time perfecting the Indian end of the schemes which he had been advancing in other parts of Europe, Asia and America during the two previous years. The chief of these was probably that which concerned the transmission of funds for revolutionary purposes, and it is known that during his brief stay in the country, a considerable amount of foreign money (not less than Rs. 50,000) was sent by one means or another to Sikhs in the Punjab.

It would seem from a remark which occurred in one of his letters ("The business can only be successful if the *Kirti* is successful") that the channel which he selected for the dispatch of such funds was the Amritsar newspaper, the *Kirti*, of which Santokh Singh (referred to earlier) was an editor up to the time of his death. It is known, too, that this paper had some Rs. 40,000 to its credit in the middle of 1927. Rattan Singh left India in January 1927 for Afghanistan, whence he was sent later to China to attempt to reconcile the conflicting Sikh parties and to reorganise revolutionary plans.

Sir David Petrie's Appreciation. So much, then, for the history of the period covered by *Communism in India, 1924-1927*, on which Sir David Petrie reached the following conclusions: "The inquiry into these intrigues is still going on. Their course, as I have explained, is difficult to follow, for the reason that the conspirators themselves have no clear-cut ideas and, by their own showing, are making little headway. Nothing has come of the plan to promote frontier disturbances, or of the proposal to enlist the aid of the Bengal revolutionaries for a campaign of assassination, although Sachindra Sanyal paid several visits to the Punjab in 1924 and claimed to have enlisted many students in the Lahore colleges. In the same way, the scheme of sending students abroad for military training has never got beyond the placing at Constantinople of Teja Singh Sutantar, who has been used more as a post-box for correspondence than anything else. As a matter of fact, Sutantar, after passing his first year's examination, was expelled from the military college he was attending on the grounds of his not being a Turkish subject, and all the efforts of Fakhri Pasha, who was formerly Turkish Minister at Kabul and knew something of the doings of Sutantar and his friends, for long failed to secure him re-admission. At no time have the facts, so far ascertained, disclosed grounds for action in a court of law. The chief features are the marked revival of the *Ghadr* movement, till then a practically moribund organisation, and the dispatch in its behalf of five men to Russia; the long and laborious journey of Rattan Singh across Europe to India, and the starting of a strongly revolutionary and Communistic paper, the *Kirti*, with

money which, there can be little doubt, has really been found from Russian sources. All these different events are clearly connected, and the intention of them is writ large on their surface. . . . Correspondence lately intercepted discloses lack of co-ordination, all-round stagnation, and a tendency to recrimination. The future of the "plot" is, therefore, not easily forecasted, as the attention of the *Ghadr* Party seems for the moment to have been distracted towards events in China. The revival, however, of a strong revolutionary spirit among the Sikhs in the United States and Canada and the growing cult of the *Babbar Akalis* afford considerable ground for uneasiness, for there is unquestionably in the Punjab an abundance of inflammable material if only the Soviet's agents could devise the means of effectively setting it alight."

A Diversion of Interest. A letter, written by Munshi Singh, secretary to the *Ghadr* Party in San Francisco, to a correspondent in Kabul early in 1927, had said :—"There is great need of work in China. Help is required. There our whole energy must be applied. There is a great need of a centre in China. Hence heavy expenses are being incurred this year." And so it came about that for the next year or so a great part of the American party's attention was diverted to China where Pattan Singh's efforts to bring about a reconciliation between the rival Sikh factions were watched with anxious interest by the leaders in San Francisco. A good deal of the Party's funds and energy were absorbed and India was for a time correspondingly neglected.

The Sustenance of Effort in America. On the American side, however, there was no decline in enthusiasm or energy. Assisted by other Indian agitators besides Sikhs, the Party advanced from strength to strength and its membership increased by leaps and bounds until, at the end of 1928, it was stronger than ever in California and had plenty of money at its disposal. It was fervently spreading revolutionary ideas among the farmers and labourers in the hope of wringing more and more money from them to send to its subsidiaries in India and else-

where. In May 1929, it acclaimed the murder of Mr. Saunders, the Assembly bomb outrage and other similar crimes committed by Sikhs in India as "the first sparks of a conflagration which will shortly envelop India and will fulfil the long cherished hopes of the *Ghadrites*". From then onwards the Party's propaganda, conducted mainly through the *Hindustan Ghadr*, took on a more strident note rising to a voluble crescendo when Bhagat Singh was hanged in Lahore in March 1931. The collections of funds on behalf of the *Kirti* and the *Ghadr* Parties also assumed large proportions and their influence in India had every appearance of growing stronger than ever.

A Revival of Plotting. Meetings were held in the latter half of 1929 at which there were discussions on the possibility of starting guerilla warfare in India on Irish lines. Communications were also received from the *Chadr* Party's representatives in Russia urging the American Sikhs to stir up trouble in India, and tentative proposals were made to overcome one obvious obstacle to the success of these plans by dispatching arms and ammunition to India and by teaching the art of the manufacture of bombs to returning emigrants. This orgy of plans and preparations synchronized with the arrival of Teja Singh Sutantar fresh from his course of military training in a Turkish academy, and there is no doubt that it was he who was responsible for the emphasis which was laid on the need for training the Party's members on up-to-date military lines. An aeroplane was actually purchased and tuition was begun under Teja Singh's direction. A bomb manual was prepared, translated into Gurmukhi (the Sikh Punjabi script), and circulated secretly to members of the *Ghadr* Party throughout the world. A series of articles from Teja Singh's pen also made its appearance in the Party's organ, *Hindustan Ghadr*. All these activities received the prior approval of Moscow.

Teja Singh's Programme. A digest of a programme which Teja Singh drew up at this stage came to notice in the course of a recent search made by the Punjab police. The letter which contains it was dispatched from Panama in 1931 and was in Teja Singh's own handwriting, and there can, therefore, be no doubt of its

authenticity. The whole programme, he said, could not be disclosed openly, but the Communist Party of India had disclosed it* and it only remained for him to amplify it in certain respects. The *Ghadr* Party should, he said, be divided into six sections to deal respectively with interior politics, open organisation, foreign affairs, war, finance, and economics. The programme laid down for the first section was ordinary enough and requires no comment. The Socialist Party, the *Kirti* and *Nau Jawan* organisations were said to be "the water of the fountain" of open organisation, and it was the duty of the second section to make this water "flow along one channel". The functions of the third section were outlined as being the formation of connexions with other friendly Governments and the supply of every sort of aid at the commencement of a mutiny. The war department was to attempt to meet military requirements, to prepare men through military training, and to carry on secret work in conjunction with the second section presumably amongst Indian soldiers. Its functions were summarized at greater length in the following words: "(a) recruitment of students (that it is very difficult to get firm-minded and patriotic men is well-known); (b) to get men educated in foreign countries (this, too, is a lengthy task, the most speedy method of doing this work is to secure the education of a few men and send them, under some cover, to impart training to others); (c) to teach, both in and out of the country, military and bomb work to as large a number of men as possible; (d) to collect military plans and to study the sites of all Indian cantonments, bridges, railways, and the telegraph system, and ascertain from what place operations should be directed, from where attacks should be made, where safety measures should be adopted and with what number of troops, and whence supplies should be obtained." The letter contained no details of the functions of the last two departments, presumably because they are self-evident. This interesting document has thrown much light on events which have occurred during the past four years, some of which have been referred to in this and previous chapters. That the full programme is highly

* From the date of the letter, the reference seems almost certainly to be to the Draft Platform of Action (Appendix II).

visionary was admitted by its author, who was disinclined to reveal it in its fullest form to any but a very select few. This fact did not, however, prevent him, and his colleagues, from making a beginning, as we have seen, by dispatching students to Moscow, by attempting to arrange for the importation of arms through Kabul and in many other ways. Teja Singh is clearly one of those who believes that the visionary of today is the realist of tomorrow.

Returning Emigrants. From November 1929 onwards, large batches of Sikhs, including both members of the *Ghadr* Party and others who were known to have subscribed to various anti-British funds, returned to India from the United States of America and Canada. Whether their return in such unusually large numbers had any political significance or not it is difficult to say, but it may be taken as certain that a considerable number of the returned *émigrés* had received instructions prior to their departure to get into touch with Sikh extremists in the Punjab. Some, it is known, brought money with them; others conveyed instructions from the headquarters in San Francisco, and there was undoubtedly a leavening of those whose function it was to prepare and organise against the time when the receipt of arms and other sinews of war should give the signal that the day had arrived for raising the standard of revolt. Fortunately, the names of a large number of those most immediately involved in the conspiracy were known to the authorities in India, so that their powers for evil were seriously restricted by the attentions of the police.

Reactions in the United States of America to Events in India. The spread of the civil disobedience movement in India in 1930 was responsible for imparting not only fresh impetus to the agitation in America, but also more definite shape to the Party's plans, and there are many incidents to show the extreme interest which events in India evoked in California and Vancouver. Thus, in July of that year, a meeting was held in the Sikh Temple in Vancouver to discuss a proposal for the establishment of a "War Council". While there was general agreement on the advisability of such a step, considerable discussion centred on the question of the functions

of such a body in the matter of conducting Congress propaganda, and the question was left in the air till a reference had been made to California. At a subsequent meeting, at which two visiting members of the *Ghadr* Party were present, it was decided that such a council should be formed to conduct pro-Congress propaganda, provided that its members always bore in mind the fact that the freedom of India was only to be obtained by revolution and a great sacrifice of life. If Mr. Gandhi succeeded in obtaining for India a Dominion constitution such as Canada enjoyed, these visitors said they would congratulate him, but the *Ghadr* Party's work would continue nevertheless; if he failed, the *Ghadr* Party would take up the struggle from where he broke off. At the same time invitations were issued to any Indians in Canada who wished to prepare themselves for the coming revolution in India, to visit the United States and take any course that they might select, from the *Ghadr* Party's military and explosives' expert, Teja Singh Sutantar, by whose training in Constantinople the Party set much store. In response to this invitation, three young Sikhs went from Canada to California for the purpose mentioned. Such recruits were required to take an oath before they were initiated into the mysteries of bomb manufacture, the oath being to the effect that they bound themselves to "deal with" *jholi chuks* (Government supporters) on their return to India.

An Official Offensive. Teja Singh was ordered by the United States Immigration authorities to leave the country in January 1931 and he embarked on an extensive tour of the Sikh colonies in Panama, Brazil, and the Argentine, where he claims to have established vigorous branches of the Party and to have collected large sums of money. Some part, at least, of these claims has been substantiated. There is, for instance, reliable evidence of the fact that collections in the Argentine from the date of Teja Singh's arrival there till the end of May 1934 amounted to about £7,000. Nearly half of this sum was spent on "educational expenses", which presumably means the dispatch of Sikh students to Moscow. Teja Singh's deportation was the beginning of a systematic campaign by the Immigration authorities, whose object

was to deal with the question of Indians illegally residing in California and to break up the smuggling rings, some of which were known to be operated by the *Ghadr* Party. The prospect of such a campaign greatly alarmed the leaders, and any Indians who assisted the authorities as interpreters or otherwise were openly threatened at the Party's meetings where revolvers were freely drawn. Eventually a number of these interpreters were murdered and shooting affrays became of such frequent occurrence that for some months an acute state of terrorism prevailed in the Sikh colony in California. In only one case was the murderer arrested and brought to trial. The State officials in California, anxious that action should be taken against so dangerous an association, searched the Party's offices on more than one occasion and arrested the president, Nidhan Singh. Representations were made to Washington that the Party was a Communist organisation but, possibly for political reasons, the recommendations were not accepted in Washington and Nidhan Singh was ultimately released.

Sikh Students in Moscow. The expulsion of Teja Singh and the subsequent need for caution on the part of the others, the barrenness of tangible results in India, the close and patient attention which the Punjab authorities paid to returning emigrants, the frustration of their schemes by official watchfulness and timely action, and a growing suspicion that the funds which they were sending to India were being diverted to improper uses, proved a fruitful source of disheartenment to the leaders in San Francisco, and the centre of *Ghadr* activity shifted to Europe, and more particularly to Moscow. I have already mentioned in that section of Chapter 5 which dealt with Rattan Singh's letter* that the writer was in Berlin at the beginning of 1932 and that he attached great importance to the arrival of young enthusiasts from the Argentine for training in Moscow's academy. Teja Singh was still in South America at this time, and the concerted action of these two agents of the Comintern (as they then became†) gave rise to an arrangement by

* *Vide* pages 42-4.

† There is well-documented evidence that both Rattan Singh and Teja Singh have consistently taken their orders from Moscow for the past three years.

which an annually increasing number of the *Ghadr* Party's recruits were dispatched to Moscow for a year's training in espionage, sabotage and other equally dangerous forms of secret work. Rattan Singh's letter in question indicated that one Sikh from San Francisco and one from East Africa had actually passed through his hands, and that a further batch was expected from the Argentine in the near future. By the end of the year the number under training seems to have been twenty or more ; a year later it was double that number ; and the position at the time of writing is that, after subtracting those who have been sent out into the world as finished agents, there are still some sixty* Sikh students in "hospital" in Moscow (as Communist jargon has it). They have been drawn not only from the Americas and several parts of East Africa, but also, as intercepted correspondence shows, from Fiji and New Zealand (where the *Ghadr* Party has recently established branches), Canada and China, as well as a few from India. Rattan Singh himself seems to have escaped the effects of the Nazi *putsch* in the early days of 1933, but appears to have deemed it wiser to remove his headquarters to Hamburg, where he has greater facilities for his work as the Comintern's chief recruiting agent for prospective officers in the *Ghadr* army of the future. Lest it be thought that this is, perhaps, an overstatement of the case, it would be as well to add that it is known on good authority that the course which these students undergo includes revolver, rifle and machine-gun practice and instruction in the art of assuming the leadership of rebellious mobs.

The Indian End. I now pass on to an examination from the Indian end of the various schemes already revealed. By the middle of 1928, Rattan Singh's mission in China had ended in failure and India had begun once more to receive the undivided attention of the headquarters group in America. But it was some time, nevertheless, before there were reactions in the Punjab by any means commensurate with the revival of enthusiasm

* This figure does not take account of a few Indians (non-Sikhs) who have been collected from other sources from time to time during the past five years (e.g., those referred to on page 178).

already noticed in the United States of America. In the meantime, the Punjab branch of the *Ghadr* Party had been renamed the *Kirti-Kisan** Party and its professed aims and objects were : “ (1) to achieve complete independence from British imperialism by employing every possible method in order to liberate the workers and peasants from political, economic, and social serfdom and to establish their united democratic power ; (2) to organise the workers and peasants.” The Party’s efforts were, however, mainly confined to the Lahore and Amritsar districts and did not at first command a very great measure of success. In mid-September 1928, for instance, Sohan Singh “ Josh ”, of later notoriety as Philip Spratt’s Punjabi accomplice, and Bhag Singh “ Canadian ” produced a flamboyant poster, which bore the unmistakable signs of Communist teaching, to advertise a workers’ and peasants’ conference to be held at Lyallpur at the end of the month. The conference was duly held but proved to be a very limited success. S. A. Dange, Spratt, Bradley and a number of other attractive speakers had been billed to attend, but no extra-provincial Communist of any importance put in an appearance. While the rural members of such an audience as there was undoubtedly appreciated the recitation of their grievances, the effect proved entirely ephemeral and the conference failed conspicuously to achieve its chief object, which was to capture the support and sympathy of the rural classes of a district with unenviable political traditions. On the other hand, Communist doctrines were proclaimed with more candour than on any previous public occasion and anti-Government and anti British statements held strident sway.

Outside Assistance. Such early activities as there were, were built on the efforts of a few men such as Sohan Singh “ Josh ” with the outside support of George Allison and Philip Spratt, and when the arrests prior to the Meerut case removed these props, the structure thus built collapsed. It will be convenient to mention here another of Moscow’s endeavours to assist this nascent movement in the Punjab. In August 1928,

* Workers’ and Peasants’.

information was received in India that Harjap Singh and another Punjabi had recently left Moscow for India travelling via Afghanistan. Harjap Singh was one of the five S'ikhs who left Mexico for Moscow in January 1926 for instruction in Bolshevik propaganda and was, besides, one of the most dangerous members of the Sikh revolutionary conspiracy abroad. Fortunately, both he and his companion were arrested by the Afghan authorities while attempting to cross the Russo-Afghan border and their plans were thus frustrated for the time being. Harjap Singh had been contemplating a return for some time and he actually visited Paris in 1927 in the hope of obtaining a false passport. Santa Singh, another of the five students, who had accompanied Harjap Singh on this earlier venture, succeeded in getting away to India, where he was captured and interned shortly after his arrival.

After Meerut. That the party was slow to recover from the effects of the Meerut arrests is shown by the fact that a meeting was held in the office of the *Kirti* in Amritsar in December 1929 with the object of "re-organising" the *Kirti-Kisan* Party, the implication being that nothing had been done in the recent past. The work of formulating a new programme was entrusted to a sub-committee and it was decided to hold an all-India *Kirti-Kisan* conference at Lahore at the same time as the annual session of the All-India National Congress. As it so happened, this latter conference proved to be a turning-point in the Party's career.

The Lahore Congress. Held in an atmosphere surcharged with violent revolutionary feeling the like of which India had probably not seen since the Mutiny, the Lahore Congress inevitably called forth an unprecedented amount of enthusiasm for the Communist programme which it advocated. Many extremist bodies, of which the *Kirti-Kisan* Party was but one, held miniature congresses of their own and discussed and passed hundreds of resolutions, many of them of an extremely violent character. All such showed themselves ready vigorously to pursue any activities which Gandhi and the Congress

chose to prescribe, provided they were capable of being conducted into revolutionary channels ; but they were clearly intolerant of the control even of such hot-heads as Jawahar Lal Nehru then showed himself to be. Although much of the artificial excitement engendered at Lahore evaporated when those present there had dispersed to their homes, yet the proceedings gave considerably more lasting impetus to all extremist movements and to all activities comprised within the expression coined there, " dangerous thinking and dangerous living "

Civil Disobedience. There can be no doubt that the body which emerged from the Lahore Congress under the name of the Indian National Congress was the product of an alliance between extremists and revolutionaries, such as the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* and the *Kirti-Kisan* Party, or that, among the methods brought into play by the new orientation of the Congress creed, were the exploitation of the prevailing *Kirti-Kisan* sentiments and the employment of youths and students to work on their behalf. This being so, it is hardly surprising that it is a matter of extreme difficulty to disentangle from the history of the next few months the part played by each of the forces contributing to disorders which affected the Punjab no less than the rest of India. By no means can it be said that the general body of the Sikhs worked with the Congress, but the attitude of this virile community occasioned many anxious moments, particularly after their *Sisganj* temple in Delhi had been accidentally struck by police buckshot in May 1930, and there were several indications that the earlier teachings of the *Kirti* group had not fallen entirely on barren ground and that, in certain places, Communist ideas had begun to leaven the minds of the Sikh peasantry. Indeed, the return of large numbers of Sikh emigrants at this time caused the *Kirti* Party to talk on more than one occasion of a revival of the *Babbar Akali* movement and to request the parent body in America to support the venture with more men and more money. On the whole, it may be said of this period that the *Ghadr* Party was content to let the Congress undermine the Government while it, for its part, extended its influence

amongst the Sikh peasant population. Had the civil disobedience movement produced a sufficiently chaotic state of affairs, the *Ghadr* Party, with Moscow at its back, would certainly have stepped in and attempted to use the Congress movement for its own ends with the ultimate object of absorbing it.

Harjap Singh Again. Dismayed by this seeming absence of activity in India (as has been explained, such as there was quite indistinguishable from the more general Congress movement), the *Kirti* Party's masters in America sent Harjap Singh again to India in June 1930, and on this occasion he successfully evaded the attention of the authorities and arrived in the Punjab when the civil disobedience movement was almost at its height. His mission was to report on the uses to which *Ghadr* funds were being put ; to organise *Kirti* groups in the villages ; to select young Sikhs for military training in Moscow ; to spy on military organisations in the Punjab ; to suborn Indian troops, if possible ; and generally to prepare for an open armed revolution. He contrived to avoid arrest until the middle of April 1931, when he was interned as a State prisoner under Regulation III of 1818 ; but he was released in April 1934 on his giving a written undertaking that he would eschew all revolutionary activity in the future.

Dasaundha Singh. While Harjap Singh was working secretly, the open organisation of the *Kirti-Kisan* Party was being carried on more vigorously than ever by Dasaundha Singh, an active member of the main party with both American and Chinese experience behind him. He had been sentenced in 1926 by the Supreme Court in Shanghai to one year's imprisonment for being in possession of seditious literature and for inciting disaffection among the King's subjects. He was deported to India on the expiry of this sentence and was dealt with on arrival under Regulation III of 1818 in the same manner as was Harjap Singh some three years later. He was, however, released from confinement in April 1929, whereupon he quickly stepped into the shoes which Sohan Singh "Josh" had perforce left empty a month earlier.

The Karachi Congress and After. By March 1931 the *Kirti-Kisan Sabha*, as it then came to be called, was once more in a flourishing condition. The session of the Indian National Congress which was held at Karachi in that month gave it further opportunities of making its revolutionary voice heard, and together with its ally, the aggressively revolutionary *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha*, from which it was then hardly distinguishable, it organised a simultaneous joint conference. The aims of these two *sabhas* were very closely allied, each contained Muslims and Hindus as well as Sikhs, and it soon became clear that both were equally dissatisfied with Mr. Gandhi's "surrender" to Lord Irwin in March 1931. It was clear, too, that their extremist programme made a considerable appeal to those "political" prisoners who had been released as a result of that "surrender" and that the strength of both parties was being greatly reinforced thereby. In an article which appeared in the official organ of the *Kirti-Kisan Sabha* just before the Karachi Congress, Mr. Gandhi was severely criticized for overlooking the interests of the workers, and the villagers were called upon to start their own *sabhas* in different parts of the Punjab and to struggle for the rights of their class against the "atrocities" perpetrated by executive officials as well as capitalists, both Indian and British. For two months thereafter, the peasant problem in the Punjab, made worse by the then prevailing economic depression, gave rise to grave apprehension and cause for constant official watchfulness. It was feared that a movement such as that which the *Kirti Party* sought to initiate would occasion considerable embarrassment to the authorities generally, even if the police were able to thwart the Party's known intention of doing something "practical".

The Collapse of the Movement. But at the end of May, the Government of the Punjab announced certain remissions of revenue which undoubtedly came as a very real relief to that section of the agricultural population which had been hardest hit and which was, therefore, most susceptible to Communist promises of a Utopia in the making. Although the *Kirti-Kisan Party* made strenuous efforts both to take credit for these remissions and to decry them as niggardly, yet there can be no doubt

that Government's gesture took much of the wind from the Party's sails. The process of emasculation thus begun was continued by a series of judicious arrests and prosecutions and by a prudent use of the preventive sections of the law. A series of conferences held at the close of 1931 proved a comparative failure when measured by the earlier events in Karachi, and by the end of the year, what had shown early promise of being a most dangerous movement, had been so weakened by official pressure of one kind or another that the achievement of even a part of its objects was placed beyond the bounds of practical politics. The failure of a conference held at Sargodha in January 1932, to which leaders from outside the province had been invited, marked the virtual end of the campaign. The *Kirti-Kisan Sabha's* preachers had, however, penetrated almost every village in the Sikh districts and had taken to the cultivators doctrines which might well have been expected to make an appeal in the temporarily impoverished areas where they were preached. That they failed to do so is due as much to the Government's counter-attack as to the fact that much of the propaganda used was far above the heads of the simple rustics for whose consumption it was concocted.

Internal Strife. Thereafter decay set in. More recent efforts on the part of Bhag Singh "Canadian" to extend the sphere of the Party's influence and activities to Calcutta, Karachi and Jamshedpur, and to other places where Sikh colonies exist, met with failure; the formation of a "League Against Imperialism" in which both *sabhas* could unite, was mooted at the end of 1932, but the proposal came to nothing. This League was to be divided into three sections—a terrorist group, a group for propaganda work and a labour group—in order to give to all those who it was hoped would join it scope to exercise their special talents. The discussion of organisational details revealed a marked cleavage of opinion between the Muslims and the Sikhs, however, and provoked a serious split in the ranks of the *Kirti-Kisan Party*. The rift was widened in February 1933, and a stormy meeting, some six weeks later, completed the process. The *Kirti-Kisan Party* became once more a purely Sikh body with a man named Gurdit Singh at its head, and the

Muslims, under Feroze-ud-Din Mansur, endeavoured to set up a new organisation, styled the "Anti-Imperialist League", which was to establish connexion with similar Communist bodies in other parts of India. So, too, the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha*, on whose membership both Sikhs and Muslims cast envious eyes, was racked by communalism and consequent internal wrangling, and financial stringency added still further to its troubles.

Funds from Abroad. Meanwhile, however, funds continued to arrive from *Ghadr* sources in America and elsewhere in fairly substantial quantities and by various ingenious routes the discovery of which became a matter of increasing difficulty. A banker's draft for Rs. 35,000 from San Francisco in favour of a returning emigrant, a number of small subscriptions and donations from abroad to the *Kirti* newspaper, a contribution of £50 from Sikhs in Fiji to the funds of the Workers' and Peasants' Party,—these are a few examples of obviously suspect sums in respect of which proof of evil intent was insufficient to warrant a seizure. Fortunately, the movement which such funds were intended to promote benefited by their arrival only to a limited extent. At the end of 1932, control of the Party's finances was in the hands of Dasaundha Singh, Feroze-ud-Din Mansur and two others, and about this time charges of maladministration and misappropriation were levelled against them. Dasaundha Singh was eventually forced to produce the account books for inspection and, although the examination was conducted with the utmost secrecy, unpleasant facts began to leak out which were duly reported by interested persons to those in financial control in America. Matters were further complicated at this stage by the opportune seizure of the accounts by the Punjab police, and Dasaundha Singh's reputation rested (and still rests) under the shadow of half-proved charges of embezzlement. Supplies were subsequently cut off, and the *Ghadr* Party's adherents in the Punjab were informed that further funds would be forthcoming only when there was some guarantee of an adequate return for their expenditure.

Communist Emissaries. It was probably the revelation of the unsatisfactory state of affairs described

above which caused the dispatch to India of Wasdev Singh, *alias* Isier Singh, already referred to.* Entering the North-West Frontier Province early in 1933, he appeared to be directing the *Ghadr* Party's operations from a hiding place in the Punjab. A letter which he wrote to a friend in the United States showed that he was making strenuous efforts to reorganise the *Kirti* Party on an extensive scale and that he contemplated the publication of a weekly journal in Urdu and Gurmukhi for the propagation of *Ghadr* and Communist ideals. Thereafter, funds again began to arrive and it seems certain that Wasdev Singh satisfied his American paymasters that he, at any rate, was to be trusted. It is, therefore, the more fortunate that he was arrested in June of the same year and confined under Regulation III of 1818. A disquieting feature of Sikh activity during this period was another determined effort to spread the Party's influence outside the Punjab. There was, for instance, a noticeable influx of leading members into Calcutta on one pretext or another, but all, as it proved, for the one purpose—the formation of revolutionary connexions. There was, moreover, talk in Sikh circles of another returned emigrant who had settled in Calcutta in order that he might serve as a medium for correspondence between workers in northern India and Calcutta and America. Investigation of this rumour resulted in the arrest, at the end of October, of a suspicious Punjabi who seemed to fit the description given. This individual proved to be Abdulla, *alias* Safdar, who had arrived in India on the 28th June and for whose arrest and internment the Punjab police had obtained a warrant. Safdar had originally joined the *hijrat* movement in 1919 and had drifted to Moscow where, in 1922, he joined the Communist University for workers in the East, in order to study for a "red" professorship. Thereafter, he worked for some time with Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi, in the Indian section of the Comintern. Papers which a search of his rooms produced, left no doubt of the fact that he had visited Rattan Singh in Germany prior to his return to India and that he had come on an important mission, namely to effect liaison between the Communist groups in Bengal and the Punjab.

* *Vide* page 44.

At the same time considerable attention was also paid to the Sikh colony in Jamshedpur, Messrs. Tata and Co.'s headquarters in Bihar and Orissa, and the importance which Sikh revolutionaries are known to have attached to this branch of their work raised the strong presumption that the Party was competing with the effete Communist Party of India for Moscow's financial favours. This belief was strengthened by a credible report, which was in circulation at the time, that Rattan Singh and his colleagues in Europe had been informed that, in order to qualify for a mandate from the Comintern giving it entire control of Communist activity in India, the *Ghadr* Party must show that it had the strong support, not only of the Punjab but of the rest of India as well.

The Release of the Meerut Prisoners. Internal dissension, rampant communalism, financial stringency caused by the unmasking of Dasaundha Singh, and finally the removal of Wasdev Singh and then of Safdar before they had had time to do much real harm, all left their mark on the Communist movement in the Punjab, and at the end of 1933 the two main bodies which were concerned with the propagation of the Bolshevik gospel were still in very low water. In mid-November, however, Sohan Singh "Josh" was restored to the fold, after having served the reduced sentence inflicted upon him by the Allahabad High Court. Shortly after his arrival in Amritsar, he decided to co-operate with his less illustrious fellow-prisoner Majid who was also released at the same time. The first concern of these two convicts was to amalgamate the *Kirti-Kisan Sabha* and the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha*, and it was not very long before their endeavours in this direction bore fruit. At a conference held in Amritsar on the 7th January 1934, it was decided that each group should be allowed to work on its own lines, but that all the various groups should work under one provincial body, namely the Anti-Imperialist League. The League's stated objects were, firstly, to absorb all other Communist organisations in the province, secondly, to secure complete "salvation" from British imperialism, and, thirdly, to establish a national and democratic republic of labourers and peasants free from

all capitalist elements. Sohan Singh and Majid were deputed to frame detailed rules and regulations.

These early successes were, however, confined almost entirely to the Amritsar district where Feroze-ud-Din Mansur had entrenched himself, and it was not until several months had elapsed that the preliminary spadework was completed and the leaders were in a position to attempt to spread the League's influence to other parts of the province. Emissaries such as Mansur, Sohan Singh, and Karam Singh Man (one of Saklatvala's recruits who was mentioned in the previous chapter) were sent to tour the province and to organise branches wherever they could. A Labour Research Bureau was also started and was responsible for the publication of a series of tracts which were not the less objectionable because they were couched in comparatively restrained terms. It was to this Amritsar group that K. N. Joglekar devoted the major part of his attention when he visited the Punjab early in 1934, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, to press Dr. Adhikari's views on Communist leaders in that province.

The Communist Control Board. Although the Anti-Imperialist League was reborn in auspicious circumstances, Feroze-ud-Din Mansur's continued connexion with it was a fruitful source of friction. Memories of his conduct in the early days of 1933 still lingered, and efforts to heal the schism which then occurred were of no avail. Those Sikh leaders who had captured the *Kirti-Kisan* Party were willing enough to welcome Sohan Singh back, but they refused to countenance the activities of an organisation in which their old Muslim enemy occupied a prominent position. After a brief period of indecision as to what line they should take, Gurdit Singh and his colleagues embarked on a course parallel to that which Sohan Singh "Josh" was pursuing. Arbitration boards were formed in a number of centres to compose any local differences there might be between collateral branches of the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* and the *Kirti-Kisan* Party, and the work thus begun was completed at a general meeting on the 8th April when a provincial Board of Control was formed. The functions of the Board

were said to be to remould the *Kirti-Kisan* Party into a *Kirti* League and a *Kisan* League, and to demarcate the duties of the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* as an association for revolutionary elements amongst the middle classes. The Board was also to have complete control of the finances of these three bodies and was to endeavour to secure identity of aim and harmony of effort between them in their respective spheres of activity. A later duty with which the Board seems to have been entrusted was the prevention of encroachment by the Anti-Imperialist League upon the joint party's field of recruitment and operation. Two months after its formation, the Board dispatched a deputation to tour the province with the dual object of studying economic and political conditions in each district and uniting the scattered forces of district organisations subordinate to the N. J. B. S. or the *Kirti-Kisan* Party. They performed their task with great care and skill and suggested lines on which the Communist movement could most usefully be developed. In the course of June and July they visited nineteen districts and selected nine rural and six urban centres whereat organisational work could suitably be done amongst peasants or industrial workers. They further suggested that twenty-five picked organisers be appointed to man these centres, and that those sent to work in the rural areas be instructed to pay special attention to army pensioners and to serving soldiers on leave in the villages, while the question of circulating suitable printed matter amongst the troops ought also to be given careful consideration. These suggestions were later accepted by the Board, which appointed two sub-committees, one to see that they were acted upon and the other to take charge of propaganda.

Returning "Graduates". Amongst the members of this central Board was one Davinder Singh, *alias* Lal Singh who returned to India in the autumn of 1933 after having graduated in Moscow. With him was another student named Iqbal Singh "Hundal", and from then onwards others of their kind have continued to arrive in India at irregular intervals. Having renounced their religion when they became Communists, they are naturally

not averse to the removal of their beards or *kes**. In such circumstances they can more easily pass as Muslims or Hindus, and there is reason to believe that a few of them have adopted Mahomedan names. The chances of discovery are still further lessened by the fact that many of them are equipped with false passports and travel documents, which are so cunningly executed in Moscow that the forgeries in them can be detected only by experts, and it is hardly surprising, therefore, that the arrival of many of them has passed unnoticed. Those who have been detected have usually travelled light. Some have come direct from Europe†; others are known to have visited East Africa on their way; and not all of them have chosen Bombay as their port of disembarkation. Once in the country, they tend to disappear and their presence is only fortuitously revealed by the occasional seizure of documents drafted with the utmost care so as to give away neither their writers' identity nor their whereabouts. Ten have thus revealed their presence so far, and it is estimated that there are fifteen or twenty others at work somewhere in India who are unaccounted for. One of them is said to be Teja Singh Sutantar. Not all of them are of the same high standard, for there were complaints some time ago that the direct recruits from India were of poor quality as compared with those whom the leaders in California selected, but it is an uncomfortable thought, nevertheless, that so many graduates of "Moscow University" should be at large in the country without any check upon their movements or their actions. Still more disquieting is the certainty that their number will be considerably augmented as month succeeds month.

Saba Jawala Singh. The precise relationship of these returned students with the various Communist organisations at work in India is not yet known, but it is both natural and probable that their *Ghadr* origin brings them into closer alliance with the *Kirti* leaders than with those of the Communist Party of India, which, for all its

* The long-hair worn by Sikhs as a religious duty.

† The route at present in favour is by Soviet ship from a Black Sea port via Athens to Trieste and thence onward to India. An Athens stamp on a passport is, therefore, an object of suspicion.

assumption of the title "Section of the Communist International", has no title to the claim that it is only Indian organisation on whose activities the Comintern's hopes are founded. The most acceptable of several well-reasoned theories on the subject is that the policy adopted by Wasdev Singh is still being pursued, and that Rattan Singh's agents are endeavouring to furnish solid and demonstrable support for his earnest and persistent requests that the *Ghadr* Party be given a charter as the Comintern's sole representative in India. Of the fact that these returning Sikhs place their services at the disposal of the *Kirti* leaders there are several indications, one amongst them being the case of Baba Jawala Singh. Having served out a sentence of transportation for life which was passed upon him in 1915 as one of the most important of the prisoners arraigned in the first Lahore Conspiracy case, Jawala Singh was released from jail at the end of 1933. He was welcomed back to the Party on his return to Amritsar and set out in August 1934 on a protracted tour of Sikh colonies outside the Punjab, ostensibly to collect subscriptions for the relief of the families of Sikh political prisoners, but in reality, as it is known, to further the organisation of the *Kirti* groups outside the Punjab and to enlarge the circulation of the Party organ, the *Kirti*. His tour took him to Calcutta, Jamshedpur and Kharagpur (where the Bengal-Nagpur Railway workshops are situated), to Nagpur and Jubbulpore, and to Lucknow, Cawnpore and Allahabad. He also visited Delhi on his way back to Amritsar. Very little is known of the results of his tour, but it is established that he regarded Jamshedpur as a most promising field and assured those at work there that he would shortly dispatch three experts trained in Moscow to help them. They would, he said, obtain employment of some kind as a cover for their real work and would be prepared, if necessary, to work as labourers on eight annas a day. There are as yet no visible signs that this promise has been implemented, but it is impossible to state with any certainty that none of the twenty unknown *Ghadr* graduates have found their way to this important centre of Sikh industrialism. There are rumours, too, that other graduates are secretly at work in Bombay, Allahabad, Ahmedabad and several places in the Punjab, and

also from time to time in Calcutta, Bikaner and Pondicherry. Though none of these rumours has as yet been substantiated in material detail, it would be absurd to deny the probability that many of them are founded on fact.

The Proscription of Communist Bodies in the Punjab. The combined effect of the operations of all the Communist agencies briefly described in the last few pages was by no means inconsiderable, and the resultant situation caused the Punjab Government to follow the lead given by the Government of India. Early in September a notification appeared which declared as unlawful the Anti-Imperialist League, the Punjab *Kirti-Kisan* Party, the provincial *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* and two other less important bodies. Their offices were promptly searched by the police, and a number of important documents and a mass of propaganda literature were seized. Thereafter all five organisations announced their dissolution. Speeches made thereafter were of a milder order; the *Kirti* decided to publish "weak articles" in future; the flood of propaganda was stemmed; and it quickly became apparent that open Communist activity was at a standstill. Such secret activity as there was seems to have taken the form of conducting study-circles and workers' leagues, but did not amount to much; and so secretly is it being conducted that the headquarters of the Communist Party of India are experiencing considerable difficulty in discovering what it amounts to!

Conclusion. It is recognized, on the one hand, that there is a vast difference between the plans of the *Ghadr* conspirators and their fulfillment, but on the other hand, those whose memories take them back to the days of the *Babbar Akali* movement in 1923, or even to more recent events in 1931, will find it difficult to regard with indifference the present portentous signs of secret activity. The flow of propaganda, funds, emissaries from America and Russia and elsewhere has not ceased. Grist is still being found in all parts of the world for Moscow's revolutionary mill. A few desperadoes, and a larger number of those whose dangerous potentialities are only of less degree because they lack experience, are at large in India,

and there are many more of both classes in California and Moscow ready to follow these p'oneers when the propitious moment arrives. There is ample evidence, over and above that which has already been recorded, that the activities described in this chapter have been the direct outcome of pressure and assistance from the *Ghadr* headquarters in San Francisco, which is becoming more and more subservient to Moscow. Rattan Singh, the main link between the two, has, indeed, shown signs on more than one recent occasion of an inclination to short circuit the American centre and to pass on the Comintern's orders direct to India. Logged persistence and unbending intransigence are marked characteristics of all schemes formulated in these two places, and such schemes can only be frustrated by equal persistence and equal energy on the official side. Failure in this respect can have but one result, and the murders in San Francisco in the early part of 1931 have lifted a corner of the veil and given the world a glimpse of what that result will be.

PART FOUR

Conclusions

CHAPTER 22.

INDIA'S LEGAL ARMOURY AGAINST COMMUNISM.

Conspiracy. It now remains to examine the weapons with which the authorities in India have been equipped to enable them to combat this dangerously insidious movement. For several years the weapon most commonly used was section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code which provides for the infliction of a maximum sentence of transportation for life on two or more persons who conspire to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. It soon became apparent, however, that the value of this section, at first a useful means of bringing offenders to speedy justice, had been seriously impaired when the seeds sown at Cawnpore and fostered by Bhagat Singh at Lahore bore fruit at Meerut in 1930 and 1931. Mention has been made in an earlier chapter of M. N. Roy's criticism of the failure of the accused at Cawnpore to extract even a modicum of advertisement from their trial. Bhagat Singh made no such mistake. The prisoners' dock became a political forum and the countryside rang with his heroics. His photograph was on sale in every city and township and for a time rivalled in popularity even that of Mr. Gandhi himself. His antics and those of his confederates eventually succeeded in bringing the ordinary law to a standstill and in reducing the courts to a state of impotence, and it became necessary in 1930 for the Governor-General to promulgate a special Ordinance, without which their trial might never have been brought to a conclusion. As has already been shown Bhagat Singh's discovery was not without its effect on the other large conspiracy case which was proceeding at Meerut at the time, and, although this latter case never attracted such attention in India as did its contemporary at Lahore, the Communists concerned in it did their utmost, nevertheless, to exploit its propaganda value.

Cumbrous Procedure. Much of the trouble was undoubtedly caused by a series of amendments to the

Code of Criminal Procedure, each of which played its part in undermining the authority of the courts. One such amendment, which compelled the presiding magistrate or judge to adjourn the proceedings at the dictates of one or other of the counsel, did particular harm in this way. Of this section a Justice of the Calcutta High Court wrote in a judgement in 1931 that, while it remained on the statute book, there was no reason why any defendant need ever be convicted and, conversely, no reason why any complainant should ever allow him to be acquitted. The section in question [526 (8)] has recently been amended, and the Allahabad High Court reversed some earlier rulings which made for delay and, to that extent, the position has improved, but four costly years of the Meerut conspiracy case and the subsequent withdrawal of another such case in Delhi made it clear that more effective means must be found of grappling with Communism than the invocation of the cumbrous legal processes which surround a charge of large-scale conspiracy.

Seditious Speeches and Writings. Profiting by the experience of the past, each Indian province has tackled the problem in its own particular way. In Bombay, where the position has probably been the most acute, resort was first had to various sections of the permanent law, but when that proved ineffectual, it was found necessary to bring the temporary emergency legislation into play. The public advocacy of Communist doctrines was countered by judicious prosecutions under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code, which provides for a maximum sentence of transportation for life* for those who bring or attempt to bring into hatred or contempt, or excite or attempt to excite disaffection towards, His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India. It is a pleasing testimony to the success of these and other similar efforts on the part of the authorities that in all the maelstrom of fiery words written and spoken by Communists in Bombay in the days that immediately followed the pronouncement of judgement at Meerut, there was hardly an instance of an attack on British imperialism as such; all references were to imperialism generally. But while it is gratifying

* The maximum penalty is very seldom inflicted.

to see persistent efforts rewarded, almost as much harm can be done by general as by specific incitement, and there are obvious disadvantages in a law which permits malefactors to evade it by so simple a ruse as that which became apparent in Bombay.

Promotion of Class-Warfare. At the same time attempts were made to include the speeches of Communist leaders in Bombay in the category of "promotion of feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects" *in pari materia* (namely, the workers and peasants on the one hand and the capitalists and landlords on the other) which is an offence punishable under section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code with two years' rigorous imprisonment. A number of such cases which were instituted as a result of speeches made on "May Day" 1932 were at first successful, and those who made them were convicted by the Chief Presidency Magistrate and sentenced each to a year's imprisonment.

The Difficulties of Definition. When an appeal from one such case was lodged in the High Court, however, the Bench which heard it agreed with the Chief Presidency Magistrate that it was not possible to limit the application of the section in question merely to classes of the community divided either by race or religion, but at the same time found considerable difficulty in discovering a satisfactory definition of the word "capitalist" which it described as "altogether too vague a phrase to denote a definite and ascertainable class within the meaning of section 153-A". After discussing the literal sense of the word which, he said, meant "anyone who possesses any accumulated wealth", the Chief Justice went on to say: "On that definition practically everybody will be within the capitalist class. No doubt in the region of economic discussion capitalists are referred to in some limited sense. In reference to divisions between capital and labour the capitalist generally means a person with a considerable amount of property invested in industry. But if you take any definition of that sort, it is impossible to say what amount of capital would bring a man within the class. He might be within the class one day and without it the next. He may be a capitalist in one country and not in another." The

accused person was, therefore, acquitted on this charge, though a concurrent conviction under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code was upheld.

Conflicting Opinions. This decision was naturally followed by other appeals, most of which were similarly rewarded, though it is worthy of record that a dissenting judgement in one such case (where the appellant's attack had been on British capitalists and landlords) found that the speaker could "only have meant the British investors in Indian securities and traders in India, a class or sub-class to which his audience did not belong". In this judge's opinion, too, the division between landlords and tenants was "sufficiently clear-cut to justify their being termed separate and distinct classes". As, however, a concurrent sentence had been passed under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code, the judge in question did not press his objection and the appeal was allowed in so far as it related to section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code.

A Sufficiently Clear Case. Yet another case came up on appeal at the end of 1932 and was heard by a Bench over which the Chief Justice again presided. The Bench found that the speech complained of in this instance constituted "a virulent attack against the propertied classes in India" and that the man who made it had "shown from the context that he used the expression 'capitalist' in a narrow and restricted sense". The actual words used are of some importance and may profitably be quoted: "In India your Rajahs and Maharajahs and *Zamindars* and Capitalists also make friends with big bankers and loot both peasants and labourers." Of this passage the Chief Justice wrote: "It is clear, I think, from that passage that he is using the word 'capitalist' in the sense merely of financiers or bankers, and he makes that quite clear later on because he says that the labourers of the world number 15½ annas in the rupee and that the capitalists are quite a small class. Even if we hold that the word 'capitalist' as used in this speech is not a sufficiently well-defined class, it is quite clear that Rajahs, Maharajahs and *Zamindars* are a sufficiently definite class to come within section 153-A."

A Case in the United Provinces. A man named Ram Saran Dass Johri had been responsible for distributing a pamphlet in connexion with a peasants' conference which was held at Muttra under the auspices of the Labour Party, United Provinces, in November 1933. He had been convicted under section 18 (1) of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act which provides for the punishment of those who publish or distribute unauthorized news-sheets. Section 4 (1) (h) of the Press Act of 1932 refers to a pamphlet which tends to "promote feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects", and it is provided in sections 2 (6) and 2 (10) of the Act that such a pamphlet shall be an unauthorized news-sheet. Ram Saran Dass appealed against his conviction and, when the appeal came up, the Bench which heard it discussed the earliest of the three Bombay judgements mentioned above and then went on to remark as follows: "The word 'capitalist' has not been used in the present pamphlet and, therefore, the particular difficulty which occurred in the Bombay ruling does not arise. The pamphlet, however, definitely refers, on the one side, to the *kisan* labourers in the Muttra district who labour in the fields and factories, and, on the other hand, to the rich persons, the *zamindars*, the bankers, and the petty shop-keepers. I do not think that there is any difficulty in holding that the classes referred to in the pamphlet are sufficiently well defined for the purpose of the section in question." The appeal was, therefore, dismissed, and another blow was struck in vindication of the use of this particular section of the law against the preaching of Communism.

The Present Position. The earlier rulings in Bombay, therefore (authoritative for the time being where the courts of that Presidency were concerned), raised doubts as to the real value of a prosecution, the success or failure of which hung upon the precise definition of a single word, or of a section of the law which gave to those whose activities the authorities sought to bring within it so wide a margin of safety. Those qualms still remain to some extent, though the High Court's more

recent dicta have made it clear that there are circumstances in which the stock phrases which Communists are wont so glibly to use in their speeches and writings can be comprised within the *ex hypothesi* indefinite and unascertainable classes to which, in fact, they undoubtedly refer. It remains to be seen how long it will take such speakers to adapt the precise form of their fulminations to the requirements of the law as now expounded. Meanwhile the value of the new weapon remains largely unimpaired so far as the rest of India is concerned, as can be demonstrated by the judgement delivered in March 1934 by the Allahabad High Court.

A Canadian Parallel. It is of some interest to learn in this connexion that the Supreme Court of Ontario had no doubts when faced with a question almost identical with that with which the Bombay High Court had to deal. On the 13th November 1931, the Honourable Mr. Justice Wright passed sentence in Ontario on Timothy Buck and seven other members of the Communist Party of Canada. In the course of his charge to the jury he remarked that, "this Communist Party of Canada divides the people of Canada into two classes—the proletariat, which they say are all wage-earners, and the *bourgeoisie*, who are outside that classification and would include property owners, farmers, men who conduct their own business, and all the other classes. There is a third or middle class called the petty *bourgeoisie*, which I think includes merchants and others; but for general purposes their classification is the proletariat on the one side and the *bourgeoisie* on the other. In a democratic country such as this, when a man may be a proletarian to-day, and to-morrow may be a *bourgeois*, and the reverse, is it a just, proper, lawful thing to set one of these classes against the other? Is it just and proper to stress and to advocate a struggle of one class to destroy the other?"

Communism, a Species of Treason. There is another passage in the record of this interesting Canadian case which is worthy of attention. Immediately before pronouncing sentence upon them, the judge addressed the accused in the dock as follows: "You have not been criminals in the ordinary sense, but I do not regard you

as political criminals. Your offence is of an entirely different nature from that of a political criminal ; it strikes at the very foundation of our social and governmental fabric in this country. It is a species of treason, which is one of the most detestable offences of which any person can be found guilty." The cry was frequently heard both in and out of the court at Meerut that the accused in the recent conspiracy case were being prosecuted for their political opinions. Although this theory was exploded by the passage from the judgement of the Allahabad High Court which was quoted on page 139, it is interesting to know, nevertheless, that legal opinion in another part of the Empire coincides with that in India, however unconvincing such opinions may be to those who hold all imperialist courts in derision.

The Calcutta Carters' Strike. A case of more than usual interest, no less from the legal point of view than because it signalized a new departure in Communist tactics, was that which followed a strike of carters in Calcutta in 1930. To facilitate a right appreciation of the points involved, I give a short synopsis of the events which led up to and followed the rioting which Sir Charles Tegart, the then Commissioner of Police, described as the fiercest which he had ever seen in Calcutta. On the 1st April, new rules came into force which imposed restricted loads on buffalo carts and prohibited the working of buffaloes between the hours of noon and 3 p. m. Two days earlier a crowded meeting of carters had been held in one of the public parks and had been addressed by the leaders of the newly-formed Carters' Union, three of them Communists and a fourth a well-known Labour agitator. It was there decided that the carters should refuse to unyoke their buffaloes when ordered to do so and should defy the rule to that effect and court arrest. The speakers also instigated the members of their audience to refuse to pay fines in court and, as it afterwards appeared, to congregate on the Howrah Bridge and to leave their carts in the roadway. The leaders in question later visited the *kathals* (bullock cart depots) and tendered much the same advice.

At noon on the 1st April, therefore, the large number of carters who were as usual plying their carts in the

immediate surroundings of the Howrah Bridge unyoked their animals and removed the wheels from their carts, thus forming a regular series of barricades across the streets. Other streets over a wide area were simultaneously obstructed with Corporation dust-bins, road metal, bales of merchandise, corrugated iron sheets, and iron rails, in a manner which places beyond all doubt the fact that some central organisation was responsible for the whole occurrence. The police who attempted to remove the obstructions were met with a fusillade of brick-bats, pieces of road metal and iron bars, not only from the carters who had entrenched themselves behind the barricades but also from the occupants of neighbouring houses, and were only able to clear the area of rioters after repeated resort to rifle and revolver fire. Communist in origin, the fight was taken up by the Congress as well, a fact which is proved by a series of entirely unprovoked attacks by students which occurred later in the evening (some two hours after the main riot had been quelled) in the collegiate area remote from the seat of the earlier disturbances. A report written a fortnight later spoke of the police as having been "kept continuously on the run since the 1st" and stated that "the intention of our opponents is obviously to run the police to a standstill and to tamper with their loyalty". The events of the intervening period, though no less serious from the Government's point of view, are, however, less germane to my present restricted theme than is the original outbreak—for the carters had learned their lesson and, from the 2nd April onwards, the Communist leaders had to rely to an increasing extent on the Congress rank and file for the furtherance of their aims—and I have referred to subsequent developments only because they point to one of the dangers of allowing Communism to succeed.

Incitement to Rioting. Meanwhile, six Communist leaders had been arraigned before the Chief Presidency Magistrate on charges of conspiracy to commit, and abetment of, unlawful assembly and rioting by more than ten persons (sections 120-B and 117, read with sections 143 and 147, of the Indian Penal Code). All six were in due course sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment (the maximum punishment provided by the Code

being three years' rigorous imprisonment) and were ordered to furnish substantial security for their good behaviour for a period of three years after release. Three were subsequently acquitted by the High Court, but at a time when excitement had evaporated and when their power for evil had thus been considerably restricted. Inadequate though the sentences may seem to have been, when compared with the charges laid, they nevertheless had a salutary effect on the situation and proved the value of section 117 of the Indian Penal Code as a weapon for use against Communist agitators in times of stress.

Security for Maintenance of the Peace. It was some days, however, before the six Communist accused referred to could be brought to book, and when they were at length arrested and brought before the court they were forthwith released on bail. They made full use of the period of grace thus allowed them in an endeavour to turn the agitation which they had stirred up into channels which would lead to a general industrial strike. In this they were ably assisted by two other Indian Communists who had hastened from Bombay to Calcutta at the first sign of trouble. Thus, on the evening of the 2nd April, the Union leaders issued a revolutionary leaflet inciting the workers to organise a general strike under the leadership of the students in retaliation for the events of the previous day. At the same time Abdul Halim circulated another leaflet, printed in English and entitled "To Workers and Citizens of Calcutta", which also urged a sympathetic general strike. These leaflets and others of their kind were distributed at a well-attended public meeting where the speeches were punctuated with cries such as "Victory to the Red Army" and "Victory to Soviet Russia". On the following day another of the accused, freshly released on bail, addressed another meeting and advised the carters to continue to disobey the law, while a third addressed his public remarks to the Indian ranks of the police force, whom he advised to desert their posts.

Against activities of this nature by persons already within the clutches of the law an effective weapon was found in the shape of sections 107 and 117 of the Code

of Criminal Procedure. The former of these compels a person who is likely to disturb the public tranquillity to show cause why he should not execute a bond to keep the peace, and sub-section 3 of the latter section provides an immediate means of detaining such persons in custody (on their failing to execute a preliminary bond) while the more cumbrous processes involved in section 107 take their course.* Faulty though such a course may be as a permanent remedy, it has its advantages as a measure of temporary relief in times of stress such as Calcutta was passing through in April 1930, and I venture the opinion that, had resort been had to it more frequently in the past, the Meerut conspiracy case would not have attained to the dimensions which it did.

Urgent Prevention of Apprehended Danger.

Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure also provides certain strictly limited powers which enable certain specified officers to direct those who show signs of endangering the public peace to "abstain from a certain act", and disobedience of lawful orders passed under that section is punishable under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. So frequently has this section come before the courts on appeal, however, and so many are the legal rulings which limit and define its application and extent, that the part which it can now be made to play in the control of the activities of Communist leaders is meagre in the extreme. This was, perhaps, the draughtman's intention; for section 144 is primarily intended to cope with an immediate and unforeseen danger rather than with preparatory stages which lead up to it. It is, however, in the early stages of Communist preparation that action is most needed; for, when the time of immediate danger comes, the masses have generally been aroused and the milder forms of preventive action which the permanent law permits are then of no avail.

Propaganda Material. It has been said elsewhere that the bulk of the present expenditure of the Eastern Secretariat of the Communist International on

* Events in Nagpur in May 1934 (*vide* page 197) well exemplified the shortcomings of section 107, C. P. C., by itself.

India is now devoted to propaganda, a steady and expensive stream of which has increasingly flowed into India since Communism first took root there. In order to give some idea of the extent of that stream, I may say that during 1934 the total number of Communist newspapers and periodicals held up in the mails was in the neighbourhood of 15,000 copies ; this comprised some fifty different papers from no less than ten different countries in Europe, Asia, and America ; and it is obvious from the results of the searches which preceded the Meerut conspiracy case and from numerous other finds of such literature that it is by no means all that was sent. Indeed, the subterfuges to which those who send it resort in order to defeat the censorship and the shortness of the time available for examination preclude the possibility of obtaining cent. per cent. results in this particular branch of work, for which the police owe so much to the postal department. Communist dailies are frequently wrapped in one or two pages of the *London Times* or the *New York Herald Tribune* or other papers of similar standing ; books are wrapped in the dust covers of popular novels or religious works ; the addresses of firms or shops are used as a cover to which such literature may be sent ; and instructions such as those which an Indian distributor of a Communist weekly recently gave to the publishers are all too frequently carried out—" Please send these twelve copies in three packets of four copies each in plain wrappers as usual so as not to attract attention." To stem this persistent stream there are several methods. That most commonly employed is section 15 of the Sea Customs Act which provides that the Governor-General in Council may prohibit the bringing into India of any particular class of goods. In exercise of these powers a comprehensive notification was framed in 1927, prohibiting the import into India of any publication issued by or emanating from the Communist International or any organisation affiliated to or controlled by or connected with the Communist International. It was not long, however, before it became apparent that even this notification left certain loopholes through which such literature could legitimately find its way into the country. In 1932, therefore, a fresh notification was issued which empowered

Customs officials to seize an even greater variety of such matter. A copy of this new notification is printed as an appendix*. Should any literature escape the Customs net and be found within India, it may be seized by certain postal officials under section 25 of the Post Office Act if it is in the course of transmission by post, or under section 178 of the Sea Customs Act by the local representative of the Customs Department if it is discovered elsewhere.

Internal Propaganda. A large amount of Communist propaganda is published in India itself, however, some of it being original writings, but the bulk of it reprints or vernacular translations of matter published abroad. For this there is a permanent remedy commonly in use, the practical value of which is strictly limited. Section 99-A of the Criminal Procedure Code provides for the proscription and forfeiture by a local Government of documents which infringe section 124-A or 153-A of the Indian Penal Code, both of which have been previously discussed. There are, however, numerous legal rulings on record to the effect that a local Government cannot pass such orders unless it has the matter complained of before it. Against a daily or even a weekly newspaper, published, possibly, in a town remote from the provincial headquarters by several days, such a provision is useless; for, the particular issue complained of will have been read and re-read many times before the local Government whose concern it is can even have heard of its existence. In such a case the only effective method is to obtain and keep a substantial hold on both the printer and publisher, and this can only be done under the temporary provisions of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act which will be discussed a little later.

An Effective Order in Bengal. It frequently happens, however, that the authors, printers and publishers of inflammatory literature such as Indian Communists are wont to produce for mass consumption, conceal their identity, and the provisions of section 99-A of the Code of Criminal Procedure being largely ineffective, other measures are required to prevent the circulation of

* Appendix VII.

this type of literature. As a means of overcoming these difficulties, the Bengal Government issued, on the 23rd April 1928, an order under section 26 (1) of the Post Offices Act which empowered two senior police officers in Bengal, who were named in the order, to impound "any inland or foreign postal article which may be discovered, in the course of transmission by post, to contain literature directed to encourage international revolution". This order proved an effective weapon against this class of literature, and the fact that it is still in force in its original form to-day is sufficient testimony to the successful manner in which it has been worked.

Emissaries from Britain. Of the British Communists who have visited India from time to time Spratt, Bradley and Hutchinson have, of course, been prosecuted at Meerut while Clark and Bennett, the two Canadians mentioned in Chapter 17, decided to leave India of their own free will. The only other Communist of British extraction who has been dealt with under the Indian law is George Allison who, as Donald Campbell, arrived in Bombay in April 1926 and was deported therefrom some two years later after serving a term of imprisonment. His case raised some points of legal interest which it will, perhaps, be profitable to discuss. The charges in the lower court were framed under sections 466, 471 and 474 of the Indian Penal Code (the forgery of public documents, using forged documents as genuine and knowingly possessing forged documents, respectively), and section 6, read with section 3, of the Indian Passport Act and the rules framed under it. It was with these charges before the jury that the whole of the prosecution evidence was heard and, not until the prosecution case had closed, did the judge himself question (on the strength of the definition of a "public servant") whether the case came under section 466 of the Indian Penal Code. Up to that time it had been assumed that a British passport was a document "made by a public servant"; but sections 21 and 14 of the Indian Penal Code, which define "public servant" and "servant of the Queen", make it clear that a document issued by an official in the United Kingdom does not come within the scope of

section 466. This discovery had the effect of lowering the maximum punishment under section 471, I. P. C., from seven to two years' imprisonment. Shortly before the expiry of his sentence, Allison was placed on a vessel at sea and deported under section 5 of the Indian Passport Act, which authorizes the removal of any person who has entered British India in defiance of the passport regulations and confers upon any officer of Government "all reasonable powers" for this purpose

The Passport Act. In this particular respect the Indian Passport Act is a satisfactory weapon in the hands of the authorities, but as a means of preventing the entry of Communist emissaries it has several shortcomings. Not least of these is the fact that the rules framed under section 3 of the Act make no offence of entry into India by land without a passport except at three specified places. Rule 3 reads: "No person proceeding from any place outside India shall enter British India by sea or by air or by the Chaman, Khyler or Nushki land route unless he is in the possession of a passport." Although instances are rare of Moscow's emissaries having found their way to India otherwise than by the usual sea-routes, yet cases are not lacking of unknown and unheralded aliens having been discovered in Burma, whence they can easily and lawfully make their way to Calcutta and so to India proper. Particularly was this the case when the French offensive began in Indo-China after the 1930 rebellion there. It is known, too, that many *Ghadr* emissaries have found their way to and from America by this route which is much favoured by Sikhs who have something to hide from the authorities. They travel from Calcutta to Burma or Singapore (where travellers from India stand in no lawful need of passports), onwards to Siam, and thence through Yunnan to Shanghai, whereafter the party's smuggling rings on the Pacific coast ensure safe transit to California. Throughout the greater part of this 13,000 mile journey no questions are asked, passport control does not exist or can be overcome by the payment of a few small coins of the realm, and the stream of surreptitious travellers passes backwards and forwards unhampered. The absence of any control whatsoever on India's north-eastern frontier cannot but

occasion considerable misgivings to those who are charged with the task of keeping track of Moscow's designs against India.

Similar, though possibly less aggravated, is the position in north-western India, as the continual flow of *Ghadr* emissaries from Russia through Afghanistan to India and back has shown. Fortunately, a friendly King in Afghanistan has stemmed the stream in recent years, but it seems a trifle improvident to rely solely on the good offices of a none too stable foreign power for the protection of one's frontier from foreign penetration.

Another seeming flaw in the existing Passport Act is contained in the section which provides for the grant of visas of limited duration to those who profess a desire to pass through India *en route* for other countries, and yet fails to empower the Indian magistracy to inflict punishment on those who infringe the conditions on which such a visa was granted. Such cases are by no means rare and, although a charge of Communist activity has never yet been satisfactorily brought home to such a delinquent, several have fallen under strong suspicion and have been deported under the Foreigners Act, and in any case, the dangers of the existence of such a loophole in the law are self-evident.

Foreign Agents. The Foreigners Act mentioned above provides an effective means of ridding India of those emissaries of Moscow who cannot lay claim to British nationality. Section 3 empowers a local Government to order any foreigner to remove himself from British India, by a particular route if necessary, while the next succeeding section enables a District Magistrate to apprehend the person in question until such time as a decision shall have been reached. Failure to comply with the order renders the foreigner liable to imprisonment for an unspecified period. The existence of this section of the law has proved a valuable weapon against Communism. It will be recalled that a number of persons, including J. W. Johnstone, W. N. Kweit and H. G. Lynd, have been removed from India by virtue of it, and it is still Burma's most effective fieldpiece against the operations of Chinese Communists.

The Legal Position, Past, Present and Future.

When mention has been made of the fact that the Trades Disputes Act (which has recently been brought into operation in connexion with the Bombay strike) has proved a broken reed and that legal opinion given in 1931 prevented the use of section 26 (1) of the Indian Post Office Act as a means of intercepting money orders,* the complete tale has been told of India's scanty legal armoury against the spread of the gospel of an armed rebellion which has as its object the overthrow, not only of the King Emperor's authority but of the whole existing economic and social fabric. No one who has discerned the meaning of events described in previous chapters will deny that there are grave risks involved in a journey into the future for those who are equipped only with such rusty weapons as these. Nor are these risks only physical, it would be unwise to overlook the psychological dangers, which will be the greater by sudden contrast with the present position, sheltered as it is by temporary emergency legislation. There can be few who have forgotten how great a strain was put upon the morale of the subordinate ranks of the police in the early days of 1930 or who have lost sight of the moral advantage which subversive elements then gained from the apparent impotence of the authorities. It has already been shown that it was only the existence of the Bombay Special (Emergency Powers) Act which saved Bombay City, less than a year ago, from chaos, and her working class population from starvation and carnage. That Act is one of many whose validity will expire before the end of 1935, and if I give details of a few of the powers thus about to lapse, it is only because to do so will make clearer the distinction between the present state of comparative security and the extreme difficulties which will have to be reckoned with in 1936.

Provincial Acts.

Foremost amongst the additional powers thus temporarily bestowed are those which provide for the arrest and temporary detention of persons who have acted, are acting, or are about to act in a manner

* This decision did not affect existing arrangements for the interception of telegraphic money orders, cheques, banker's drafts, etc.

prejudicial to the public safety or peace. Such powers exist in Bombay, Bengal, the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province and similar action could be taken against Communists, in certain extreme cases, in Burma and Assam* also. More general is the power to prescribe the residence and movements of such persons, which has been given to every local Government except those in the Central Provinces and Madras†; those who disobey such orders are liable to imprisonment. Other typical powers which these local Acts confer enable the authorities to secure reports of public meetings, to control the operations of the posts and telegraphs (including the transmission of money orders), to limit access to certain places, and to prohibit or regulate traffic,—none of which matters are adequately provided for elsewhere in the Indian Statute book. All are based on the old ordinances which were, in their turn, pieced together at the dictation of bitter experience of the country's legislative needs.

The Indian Press Act. Complementary to these measures, there are two important temporary Acts of all-India application which are also due to lapse in December 1935—the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1932. The first of these contained a useful provision which empowered a local Government to inflict a substantial fine on any printing press which was used for the purpose of printing or publishing subversive literature and also to confiscate the matter in question; and another section made illegal the sale, distribution or publication of literature of a similar nature. These provisions, at first included as sections 4 and 18 in the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931, were made more potent by the ordinances which the second civil disobedience movement brought forth. A special session of the Assembly at the end of 1932 passed a comprehensive Criminal Law Amendment Act and thereby upheld the greater virility of the Press Act and prolonged its operation for a further period of

* The Burma Criminal Amendment Act does not expire till the 31st July 1936. The equivalent Act in Assam is a permanent measure.

† Burma and Assam must again be partially excepted.

three years. The promulgation of the ordinances in January 1932 and their subsequent enactment had an immediate and lasting effect on the tone of all classes of subversive writers except, perhaps, those who preferred to publish their work clandestinely, and even persons such as they found considerable difficulty in getting their handiwork printed and circulated.

A Specific Case. As illustrating the uses to which the Press Act could be put, I may recall the case of Ram Saran Dass Johri which was discussed at an earlier stage in this chapter in connexion with section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code. Another case in point is the prosecution of Amir Haidar Khan, whose conviction in Madras in 1932 has already received brief mention in Chapter 17. The charges laid against him proceeded from the clandestine publication of a series of actionable leaflets. The drafting and publication of these leaflets were exclusively the work of Amir Haidar and one assistant who was also arrested. There was also evidence of their having been in possession of a number of these leaflets and of having distributed others. Amir Haidar was, therefore, charged under section 18 of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931 and, when further legal advice had been taken, a supplementary charge of sedition (section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code) was added. Judgment was pronounced in both cases on the 14th November 1932 and Amir Haidar Khan was sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment for sedition and to six months' rigorous imprisonment on each of three counts under section 18 (two of these periods to run concurrently), the whole of the year's sentence in the latter case to take effect on expiry of the sentence under section 124-A, Indian Penal Code. Thus was a dangerous leader removed from the scene of his labours.

Unlawful Associations. Another important direction in which the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1932 gave much needed assistance to the authorities was the provision of useful additions to the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908, a measure of which little use had been made since 1922 when it became the butt of the Indian legislature and was reduced to a mere

shadow of its former self. In the form in which it existed at the end of 1931, it merely enabled a local Government to notify as an unlawful association any organisation which had as its object interference with the administration or maintenance of law and order, or which constituted a danger to the public peace. Any person who could be proved to have assisted the operations of such an organisation was liable, on conviction, to a sentence not exceeding 6 months' rigorous imprisonment, while those who went one step further and assisted in the management or promotion of such an organisation ran the risk of imprisonment for two years. The ordinances promulgated at the beginning of 1932 made possible a close scrutiny of, and a rigid control over, the funds at the disposal of such unlawful associations, and the powers of local Governments were so extended as to include the ultimate confiscation of any funds which investigation proved, were intended for subversive purposes. These powers were later included in the central legislation referred to and, although the occasions on which they have been exercised during the past two years are extremely few, they have nevertheless provided a useful reserve against any large influx of Communist money into India, particularly so since the Communist Party of India was declared unlawful. Another important provision in the Act so amended gave powers to local Governments to take possession of places used for the purposes of an unlawful association and of moveable property found therein. In short, the legislature succeeded in making of this emasculated Act a real power in reserve against the operations of all subversive elements. Its independent value against individuals who overtly or secretly profess "applied Communism" (as M. N. Roy has called it), yet openly belong to no ascertainable Communist party or association, is less apparent, however, and the fact that no prosecutions have yet resulted from the proscription, in July 1934, of the Communist Party of India and its auxiliaries confirms the current belief that its only effect is to drive such persons underground, where their nefarious activity is admittedly beset with difficulties but is not rendered impossible. Longer experience will probably show, as it has in the case of Bengali terrorists, that more adequate measures (on the lines of those now in existence

in the most favoured provinces) are necessary, if the activities of leading Indian Communists are to be effectively curbed.

The Efficacy of Special Legislation. For the rest, the Government's programme of temporary legislation, not only succeeded in closing a number of loopholes in the permanent law of the land and in accelerating the dispensation of justice, but also furnished harassed authority with those reserves of power which alone can make for confident, and, therefore, generous, administration. With the completion of the programme, India had no lack of weapons with which to combat every form of subversive movement which threatened her peace and prosperity, not least of which is Communism. That a few are faulty and others unwieldy where Communism is concerned is a matter for some regret—for every weak link inevitably detracts from the value of a chain; but this is the less surprising when it is remembered that the chain was forged for use against a different movement, in the make-up of which secret activity played a comparatively minor part. That it has had its effect on Communism as well is demonstrated in a variety of ways, and there are several pieces of independent testimony to the good which the new legislation did in a general way to check the growth of this noxious weed. Thus a prominent member of M. N. Roy's party wrote in 1932 to his friends in Berlin that, "the trades-union movement is practically at a standstill owing to the abnormal conditions prevalent under the Ordinance régime." He had previously made it clear that the "trades-union movement" of which he was writing consisted of a series of general strikes quite different from the "sporadic strikes of a purely defensive character" which had taken place in various places during the year. So, too, one of the members of Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar's group, having surveyed the situation in Bengal immediately on his return from abroad, wrote to one of his colleagues in England: "You will be glad to learn that our poor friend has got a baby. It is 4 months old now. The baby was not quite O. K. when it was born, but with proper care it is gradually gaining health. But the baby is so very sick that we are afraid it may be pretty difficult to make

it survive the cold weather, specially P. B. I'll send you a photograph of the baby". The "baby" is a Communist paper, called *Sarbhabara*, which made its appearance in Bengal in the middle of 1931, and "P. B." (Press Bill) refers to the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, which had just been passed into law when the letter was written.

Supplementary Measures. What present-day politicians delight to call "repressive measures" cannot however, alone combat so all-embracing and all-pervasive a menace as Communism. Given adequate legal sanctions, the police and magistracy and the postal and customs services can each do something towards reducing the risk of widespread lawlessness in the trades-union and agrarian fields and can to some extent curtail or sterilize the activities of the few who show signs of misleading the many; but, to quote again the words of the Indian Communist in Europe to which Sir David Petrie gave prominence*, "the real impossible task is to stop the spread of ideas which travel without vehicle and gain momentum from resisting force." The ultimate solution of this problem is in other hands; to them must be left the task of translating into terms of Indian economics the many good features of the Communist system. As experience in Bengal has shown quite decisively that terrorism cannot be suppressed by the police alone while other parts of the administrative machine work detachedly and independently, so too, in the wider, and ultimately not less dangerous, sphere of Communist activity, effective counter measures are an impossibility unless all departments of the State combine to ensure that nothing that is harmful in the Communist creed shall be allowed to creep unchallenged into the schemes or the system which are their respective cares and, conversely, that nothing reasonable is left undone to render less fertile the ground on which Bolshevism thrives and to make less imminent the dangers which it brings in its train.

Legitimate Trades-Unionism. It was probably thoughts such as these which prompted the Inspectors-General of Police of all the Indian provinces, when they

* *Vide* page 21.

were in conference recently, not only to exhort the Government of India to reinforce the law of the land when the temporary legislation expires at the end of 1935 but also to press "the desirability of the development in India of a healthy trades-union movement". For this reason, the steps which have recently been taken to implement those parts of the Whitley Commission Report and of certain Geneva conventions which are capable of present acceptance, are particularly welcome. Such legislation cannot fail to strengthen the hands of legitimate trades-unionists such as Messrs. N. M. Joshi and V. V. Giri who are themselves helping to pass it into law. Every step in this direction is a setback to those who point out the direct and bloody path of armed revolution as the only road to freedom and prosperity for the masses. Of like effect was the Bombay Trades Disputes (Conciliation) Act to which the provincial Legislative Council gave its assent last August. This Act provided means other than direct action for the settlement of industrial disputes and sanctioned the appointment of two permanent officials to arbitrate between employers and employees in the many minor cases of grievance which usually precede a strike. This system shows every sign of being a success and it has provided a splendid opening for those trades-unionists who are farsighted enough to take advantage of it. To the Communist it is naturally anathema. Bengal has no such special legislation, but the results which attended Sir John Woodhead's speech in the local Legislative Council on the subject of the recent dockworkers' strike*—the sudden determination of Mr. Hassan Suhrawardy to intervene, the rout of the Communist leaders, hitherto supreme, and the successful conclusion of negotiations between the strikers and the employers through his mediation—are indicative of a promising future for a healthy trades-unionist movement in Bengal, if sane yet courageous leaders are forthcoming to devote their time and energy to controlling it. I am convinced that nowhere in industrial India need Communist principles and Bolshevik methods prevail if only other outlets can be provided for the voicing of the workers' complaints. Rather than any inherent preference on the part of the workers and the peasantry for the tenets and doctrines of the Communist

* *Vide* pages 255-6.

International of which they have but the haziest understanding, it is the apathy of those who advocate "class collaboration" (as distinct from "class struggle") which provides the Communists with their main opportunity. At times of excitement the police can hold the ring but they cannot compel the legitimate trades-unionists to enter it.

Rural Indebtedness. A number of provinces have taken steps during the past three years or so to redress an outstanding disability under which the agrarian population have been labouring for many decades. Foremost amongst the Communists' agrarian "demands" has always been the repudiation of all debts to money-lenders; the general aim of recent provincial legislation has been, therefore, to preserve the money-lender as a very necessary cog in the Indian economic machine and to protect his legitimate rights, but, at the same time, to limit the extent of his inroads on the slender and uncertain income of the Indian farmer, and, above all, to prevent the alienation of land in payment of debt. The distance to which the legislatures have been prepared to go in this direction naturally varies from province to province, but most provinces now have laws of this kind either on their statute books or on the legislative anvil, and each Act that is passed helps to remove one fruitful source of agrarian discontent and, to that extent, makes the task of the Communist agitator more difficult. The Legislative Council in the Central Provinces, one of the first to experiment in this type of legislation, at first contented itself with the passage of permissive legislation by the terms of which money-lenders or their debtors might submit their suits to local arbitration and thus avoid expensive resort to the civil courts. Later, more forceful clauses were added which limited the amount of interest which money-lenders might charge. The Punjab Relief of Indebtedness Act which has recently been passed in the local Legislative Council took longer strides towards what must be considered the ultimate goal. Besides providing for conciliation boards similar to those set up in the Central Provinces, it has laid it down, *inter alia*, that no civil court shall allow to the plaintiff any costs in respect of a suit which it entertains, if a conciliation board has previously adjudicated upon the debt in question and has pronounced

itself to be "of opinion that the debtor has made to such creditor a fair offer which the creditor ought reasonably to accept". In such cases the civil court shall not allow any interest on the debt in excess of six per centum per annum on the amount which was due when the board reached its decision. This is but one of the features of an Act which contains many wholesome provisions (e.g., that no creditor can claim a larger sum than twice the amount of any sum given in loan after the commencement of the Act), and it is not surprising to find that the Communist element in the Punjab, seeing a valuable weapon slipping from their grasp, endeavoured to make the peasantry believe that the introduction of the Bill was prompted by fear and to whip up an agitation for "Debt Committees in every village" which should have as their slogan, "Cancel the whole debt". These attempts to belittle the Government's efforts at amelioration of the lot of the agriculturist later gave way, when the Bill was passed into law, to propaganda intended to "explain" the implications of the new Act to the peasantry, and a *Kisan-Karza* committee has recently been established with this ostensible object. A salutary clause in the Assam Money-Lenders' Act of 1934 is also deserving of special mention. It provides a penalty for stating in the original bond a larger amount of principal than is actually given to the debtor—a fruitful source of dispute in the past. The same Act has taken the revolutionary step of laying it down that no court shall decree on account of arrears of interest a sum greater than the principal of the loan, even if the loan was made before the passing of the Act.

Other Indirect Methods of Attack. In most provinces, too, considerable efforts, sponsored both by Government officers and by non-officials, are now being made in other spheres, all of which must help to diminish the chances of Communist propaganda being given a sympathetic hearing. Into this category fall a variety of schemes for rural reconstruction, for the establishment of marketing boards, for the setting up of wireless stations which will serve loud-speakers in selected agricultural centres, and for the promotion of travelling exhibitions,—all of which are helping to improve the alienities of the Indian peasant, and to remove that very lack of sophisti-

cation and of interests outside the family circle which has rendered him an easy prey to agitators of every kind. There are indications, too, that educationists are awakening to the weaknesses of an educational system which places on the labour market many more graduates than can possibly obtain employment of the kind for which their studies have fitted them. Several eminent Indians have recently made public their views on this subject. "Grave discontent and intense bitterness are increasing apace among these young men", one of them has written, "and they are in a state of revolt against the present social and economic order. . . . The situation is grave enough for those who remain unemployed after finishing their education, but the reaction on young men who are still receiving education is of a distressing nature." It is for this reason that steps which are now being taken in Bengal to increase the possibilities of a technical (rather than a general) education are so welcome. There are wholesome signs, also, that the nationalist press is inclined to take a more serious view of Indian Communism than was the case five years ago. For this change of attitude (if change it really be) India must tender its thanks to the Congress Socialist Party, whose activities and propaganda and association with the orthodox Communists are causing alarm and consternation in the ranks of the Congress proper which is pledged to Mr. Gandhi's creed of non-violence. If present efforts do not flag; if all those who look askance at violent methods of changing the present social and economic order combine to make it clear that such methods will not be tolerated now or in the future; if those who serve the Crown, in whatsoever capacity, realize where the danger lies and what their responsibilities are; and if Governments are armed with reasonable powers for sparing use when occasion demands;—then it seems justifiable to hope that the Communist Party of India and its new-found allies will forever remain as isolate^d and impotent a body as it was from 1930 to 1933—a group of leaders without an army.

Only apathy and neglect and a complacent attitude towards it can make of Communism a serious menace to India's peace and prosperity.

CHAPTER 23.

INDIA'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES.

Self Praise is no Recommendation. Since Russia emerged, as the result of the great revolution, as the U. S. S. R., her efforts to establish economic stability have attracted the attention and interest of the whole world. The survival of the State through most difficult times, the success of many of the seemingly extravagant schemes undertaken by the Government, and the powerful publicity campaign to advertise such successes and to minimize failures, have all led many of the new generation which has grown up since the revolution to view these efforts with favour and sympathy. The horrors of the revolution and its aftermath are being forgotten and this would, perhaps, be natural and right if the efforts of the Soviet and the Comintern had been confined to such activities. The main object of this book has been to show how wrong it is only to look at the picture of Russia as painted by her present masters, and how dangerous it is not to remember, and not to take measures to combat, the consistent policy of those masters in relation to every country in the world other than the U. S. S. R. If anyone who has read this book so far is unconvinced of these dangers, my apologies will be due for not having expressed adequately what those dangers are, and, in particular, for not having emphasized more strongly what Lenin himself consistently preached, "the substitution of a proletarian for a capitalist state is impossible without a violent revolution." This gospel of Lenin holds the Communist field as strongly today as at any time since it was first announced, and, within the last twelve months, it has been forcibly endorsed even by that leading Indian Communist, M. N. Roy, who has had the temerity to break away from the Communist International's direction owing to his conviction that considerable modifications in the Comintern's plan of action for India are necessary.

Russia's Foreign Policy. It may, however, be argued that there are almost daily signs of a change in the policy of the Soviet Government, so much so that in recent years that Government has again and again shown a desire to establish really friendly relations with those of other countries, and that the general tenor of this book makes no allowance for such facts and must be the result of "die-hard" police intransigence. To this there is a definite and incontrovertible reply. There is indisputable evidence that the Communist International continues unremittingly to pursue its policy of world revolution, while, in its open activities it acts in harmony with the Soviet's declared foreign policy. This does not mean that the Communist International conceals its secret activities from the Soviet Government; on the contrary, the two organisations thoroughly understand one another and agree that, while the open policy is at present a painful necessity, the secret activities are in accordance with the real national ideals and objects. The main reason for the present open foreign policy is, of course, the fact that Germany has become a strong Fascist power, whereas only a very short time ago the Soviet had hopes of engineering in that country a revolution to establish a Communist régime. Another reason is that Japan has been upsetting Russia's plans regarding the future of the Far East and that the Soviet regard war with Japan as inevitable. For both reasons it is essential for the U. S. S. R. to have friends in Europe.

It can be admitted that gradually the U. S. S. R. may be forced, by her fear of war with Japan or Germany, or both, to modify her secret policy so as to bring it more into line with her open foreign policy. This must, however, remain only a hope, and, until there is proof that the Comintern has not only relaxed but given up its policy of working for world revolution, no country, least of all Great Britain and India, can afford to relax its efforts to render innocuous the plans and plots to introduce revolution with its necessary concomitants of bloodshed and misery. In India, as my predecessor, Sir David Petrie, wrote, "the spread of Communism is not one of those problems which may be looked at from a particular 'angle of vision'; it must be looked straight in

the face, and it must be fought with the most unrelenting opposition."

The Fight against Communism not Solely Waged by the Law and Police. The description in this book of the efforts made around and in India in recent years to further the aims of the Communist International shows that in this country those efforts have led to no solid success. I trust that the narrative has made clear some of the reasons why this is so. It certainly shows that the Government of India and the various local Governments have not underestimated the possible dangers and have been at pains to use their legal powers towards reducing such dangers. It has, probably, not shown so clearly that the Communist menace has been kept at a distance not only by police and court action. In England the great weapon against Communism is the common-sense and political understanding of the bulk of the population; a Communist orator in Hyde Park, for instance, talks to an audience composed of people who know quite as much about social and economic problems as he does; his speeches receive shrewd criticism, silent or vocal, according to the mood or wit of his listeners, and seldom do any harm. India, on the other hand, is trying to find her legs in the political world, and political sense has not yet spread far downwards. Her people require guidance and help from the comparatively few who have the education and the opportunities sufficient for the appreciation of new creeds and shibboleths. Communist fare is often served up in an attractive and insidious manner and can be made by skilled agents to appear to be the very dish for low-paid and poorly fed labourers and artisans. It can, at times when prices are bad and it is difficult to find money for rent or revenue, appear attractive to the holders of small farms. There have been times in recent years when the danger of such appreciation became increasingly real. It was then that the strength of the personal touch in the relations of district officers with the people was tested, and one of the reasons for the failure of Communism has been the success of the officers in that test. It has been mentioned before how, for instance, the wind was taken from the sails of the Communists by administrative action in the Punjab; how

heavy remissions of revenue gave heart to farmers and re-established their confidence in their Government. But the tale has not been, and probably never will be told how revenue and other officials in districts and subdivisions took their share in upholding the faith of the cultivator in those responsible for their welfare. Similarly also in other branches of the administration. There are, for instance, some colleges and schools in India which have succeeded in keeping out the influence of even the ordinary agitator during years of civil disobedience, and there are more where Communism has not yet had a hearing. Those responsible for such institutions deserve a tribute in a review of this kind, and there would be more of them if all schoolmasters in India had the education and knowledge of the world which their profession would seem to demand. In many parts of India, however, it is the good sense of the small farmer which is, perhaps, the strongest barrier against Communism; he has a natural pride in his small possessions and in the work of his hands and he views with suspicion anyone who preaches a creed likely to spell ruin to either. Where there has been a sympathetic understanding of his wants and difficulties on the part of those above him, Communist seeds have found barren ground. A greater danger lies in those parts of the country where bigger estates are common; there the responsibility of the landholder is immense; on his actions and character depends to a very great extent the possible reaction of the tenant to a gospel which promises a distribution of property to the "have-nots". Similarly in industrial areas the progress of Communist designs must depend largely on the actions and conduct of the captains of industry; the Communist has a comparatively easy task in persuading the workmen of an unsympathetic, grasping master that the change he advocates can only bring about something better than he has hitherto enjoyed. Where, on railways, in factories, workshops and mines, the workmen have realized that the will to look after labour's interests exists, Communism has made little headway.

The Future. The preceding chapters have sketched, in brief detail only when all the mass of information received on the subject is considered, the plans, scanty

successes, and more numerous failures of Communists in India. It may be of interest and value to quote the appreciation of an Indian Communist on the achievements of the Party. Writing in May 1932 to an Indian friend in England, he said :—“ I know that Communism, or proletarian revolution, may not be coming in India in my life-time. I know that our peasantry is as yet untouched and without its solid backing nothing can be done in a colonial country like India. I know that our working class is quite far from what it should be. I also know that our young men are altogether devoid of experience and very raw in ideology and tactics. I also know that our working-class movement will have to pass through any number of makeshift forms and combinations ; it is almost impossible to forecast what final form the struggle shall take, but that is no reason why the goal should be obscured, why the path should be befogged.” These are also the sentiments of the ardent, militarist Communists of Moscow and nothing is more certain than that their goal is still kept in sight and their objective, the disruption of the British Empire through India, still clear. They have been checked again and again but persist with a doggedness worthy of a better cause, and now, encouraged by the comparative failure of the Meerut case in the High Court, they are working feverishly to set their Indian machinery in motion.

The present position, as I see it, is, very briefly, as follows. The Communist International has undertaken the training, in Moscow and in England, of young Indians (and indeed young men of most Asiatic countries) of good stock and education in Bolshevik principles and methods ; some have arrived and are at work ; since their arrival a very considerable number of Bengal terrorists have swung away from terrorism with its individual acts of murder and frightfulness to a campaign to bring about mass risings in the not far distant future ; the number of such apostles will increase ; the immediate benefit has been a lull in assassinations ; one danger is that, in a province containing a large number of impressionable and out-of-work young men, the movement will flourish ; perhaps a graver danger is that it will spread to other provinces already infected with the

terrorist microbe and grow till it requires suppressing by force of arms. As regards industrial areas it must be remembered that M. N. Roy, though in prison, is still in India and that he has not found it impossible to do propaganda work from within the prison walls; both his party and the "official" party are hard at work in industrial areas. Meanwhile the rapidly growing so-called Congress Socialist Party is being invaded by Communists and, unless the more sensible members assert themselves, will itself become purely Communist. On our border we have Afghanistan where the new young King is kept on his throne by the energy and courage of one man, his Prime Minister, and where there are numerous persons anxious to have a change, even if it necessitates taking temporary assistance from the U. S. S. R. Also on our border we have Sinkiang, now to all intents and purposes a vassal State of the U. S. S. R.

It will, I hope, be clear from what has been written in the narrative of this book that there is no need, when peering into the future, for pessimism, far less defeatism. The lesson, on the contrary, is surely that the ghastly danger of a Communist-inspired violent and bloody revolution on the Russian or Chinese lines can best be met by the cool study of efforts hitherto made by Communists to undermine the political and social Indian structure, of the methods whereby these efforts have been checked, of the means which the Communist International is most likely to employ in the future, and how the strength of the Indian people, Government, Law and Police can best be mobilized to defeat its nefarious plans. Such mobilization can only be effected if the objective, means and methods of the enemy are understood and if none of these is underestimated or ignored. The object of this book is to help those in responsible posts to understand the nature of the enemy, his objective and his methods. Before the next volume on Communism in India is written great constitutional changes will have occurred and there is no sense in blinking the fact that the Communist International considers that the hopes of Communist success in India will be doubled by the changes. The successors of the present administrators in the country will, I hope, read these chapters and will appreciate the fact that every

word has been written as much for them as for their predecessors in office. I can only hope that by reading these pages they will be able to gather some glimmering of the reality of the dangers ahead, some idea of what would happen to the civilization of the whole world were India found to be (as is hoped by the Communist International) an insecure key-stone of the arch of the British Empire, and some benefit from the survey made of the weapons with which the danger has been fought and of the manner in which they have been used. The book is also intended for those officers of the Crown who, in or out of India, have to deal with Communism and its dangers in the midst of other multiple duties ; I can only express to them the hope that this survey will help them to acquire a true perspective of the movement, and that demands made of them in its connexion from time to time will appear more reasonable and justifiable than might have appeared to them without it.

APPENDIX I.

(Referred to on page 2.)

COMMUNISM (GENERAL ASPECTS).

(1) The word "Communism," in its present-day sense, is by no means self-explanatory. It has entirely shed its dictionary meaning, "a system of social organisation in which goods are held in common," and it is equally a misnomer as designating those schools of thought, which aim rather hazily at the attainment of the greatest good for the greatest number by the adoption of certain early Christian principles. The term is nothing if not specific.

(2) *Modern Communism may be said to have commenced in the year 1848 with the issue of the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.* This was an event of the first importance as marking the foundation of the struggle of the working class on international lines for industrial and political emancipation; it is, thus, a charter not only of Communism, but of all Socialism projected on an international scale.

The fundamental thought underlying this manifesto was the *Class War*, i.e., a struggle for power between the exploited and oppressed classes ("the proletariat") and the exploiting and ruling classes ("the bourgeoisie"), leading to the forcible overthrow of the whole extant ruling order and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Much of the central idea still survives, together with the characteristic phraseology of the Manifesto and the resounding slogan "Proletarians of all lands, Unite!" which is now the universal label of all Communist organisations. Communism had, however, far to travel before it reached its present form. Its first essay as an international movement ended abruptly when, owing to the infiltration of anarchist influence, Marx himself withdrew from the First International Association of Workers ("The First International") only nine years after its establishment in London in 1864. The next attempt at world organisation, the "Second International," was launched at Paris in 1889 after Marx himself was dead. This association was also designed to give effect to Marxist theories, but it developed on "Reformist" and evolutionary, rather than class-war and revolutionary, lines, and is still extant as the international vehicle of Socialism, to which most of the Socialist Parties in the world are now affiliated. The radical wing of the Second International broke away from the main body and, led by Lenin, then a political exile in Switzerland, occupied itself until 1917 in elaborating, polishing and extending the original theories of Marx and Engels along more precise and more revolutionary lines. The surreptitious return of this group

to Russia, with German connivance, in 1917 and the part played by it in bringing about the 'October,' or Bolshevik, revolution in that year needs no repetition.

(3) *With the Bolshevik revolution in Russia the theoretical era of Communism may be said to have come to an end and the practical era to have commenced.* The ensuing sixteen years, during which it has been enforced upon the whole fabric of Russian life, have crystallised the nucleus of Marxian theory, through the successive processes of Leninism and Stalinism, into a practical reality in the shape of a *politico-social-economic-financial system, containing within its own framework the State apparatus for its own enforcement and perpetuation.* This phenomenon is uniquely exemplified in the world in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

(4) It is not, however, merely as a state system and apparatus that Communism has its greatest significance. The existence and example of the First Communist State, representing as it does the complete transformation in one important country of the hitherto explored bases of society, economics and government, might of itself be considered a factor of incalculable potentialities; but, had the U. S. S. R. been content to take its place in the comity of nations, to stand or fall upon its own merits according to the verdict of its own people and to live and let live in conformity with the inter-state usages of civilisation, Communism could never have attained its distinctive position at the head of the disruptive forces of the world. The U. S. S. R. could not consent to play this relatively passive rôle for the simple reason that passivity was incompatible with the theory on which it was founded. Apart from the reason, advanced by some of the ablest of its founders, that one Communist State cannot exist indefinitely in a preponderantly capitalist world, it came into being as the result of "the first victorious socialist revolution in the world's history". The Russian Communists, its founders, adopted as their aim the exploitation of "the gains of the proletarian revolution in Russia as a first step to the creation of an international Soviet Republic. Their duty, as they saw it, was to support by all the power at their disposal every Soviet Republic, wherever it might be formed, to realise the overthrow of capitalism, to achieve complete abolition of classes, the fulfilment of Socialism and the establishment of the Proletarian Dictatorship in an International Soviet Republic. These duties were formally enjoined upon the Russian Communist Party by the only international agreement which, *as a party*, it recognises, *viz.*, The Theses and Statutes of the Communist International, which was founded in 1919. Now the Russian Communist Party in fact not only rules the Union (95 per cent. of the People's Commissars were in 1929 old revolutionaries), but was given by a Statute of the Communist International (para. 8, Theses and Statutes, 1920) a practically preponderating voice (five out of fifteen decisive votes) on its Executive Committee.

So by the inclusion and preponderance of the Russian Communist Party in the Third International, an instrument was found,

through which Communism could be spread internationally. The Soviet Government itself could hardly flout world opinion so flagrantly as to make itself, as a Government, openly responsible for the type of propaganda and agitation it was desired to embark upon; had it done so, it would have made itself blatantly indictable for interference in the domestic affairs of foreign powers and would have invited a boycott by the world powers, which might have strangled the U. S. S. R. in its infancy. Nominally independent of the State machinery of the U. S. S. R., but materially dependent upon it and controlled by its rulers, the Communist International could grow, and has since grown, to be the most powerful and far-flung propaganda organisation known to history. *It is the ceaseless propagative energy of the U. S. S. R. exercised in conjunction with the Communist International*—that is, the dynamic quality of Communism rather than the mere existence of the Communist State, which, unallied with the Communist International, would have been merely static—that *has invested the Communist movement with its universal importance.*

(5) *The Third International, Communist, International, or "Comintern,"* came into full-fledged being in March, 1919, as a result of a Congress of some forty left-wing Socialist groups from all over the world, which met in Moscow at Lenin's invitation for this express purpose. It received an initial grant of two million roubles from the Soviet Government to enable it to start its international career of propaganda and quickly developed on a world-wide scale. To-day its organs of central authority, permanently situated in Moscow, exercise the functions of a College of Cardinals in respect of Communist dogma and practice, maintain educational establishments for the training of selected foreign Communists, hold periodical congresses and plenary sessions for the promulgation of policy, and, in concert with certain departments of the Soviet Government, direct the operations of a vast intricate network of Communist organisations throughout the world.

(6) Before examining in greater detail the programme and methods of the Communist International, certain idiosyncracies of the resultant movement require special emphasis.

(a) *Its predominantly Russian character.*

While the Russian Communist Party is nominally a national section of the Communist International and, as such, should exercise no more influence than the national Communist Parties of other countries, all of which are sections of the Comintern, the latter is in fact part and parcel of the Russian Communist Party and the Soviet Government. It is, as stated, the outcome of the Soviet Government's need for self-reproduction beyond its own frontiers. And it follows that the tenets and practices of international Communism are subservient to the requirements of the U. S. S. R. and that the whole organisation of the Communist International, both in Russia and abroad, is designed to interlock with, and subserve, the domestic and foreign

organs of the U. S. S. R. Hence the Communist movement, wherever found outside Russia, is exotic; it is "wound, tuned and regulated from Russia." Without Russian support and tutelage it would disappear.

(b) *Its exaggerated centralisation.*

The highly centralised character of international Communism, which is no doubt linked with its Russian origin, is evidenced by the jealous supervision, exercised from the Centre over all the national parties and their offshoots. In no country is Communism permitted to exist as a local adaptation. Every Communist formation is bound to the letter of the Communist law as centrally laid down in Moscow; its translation into practice is safeguarded from deviation by the ceaseless vigilance of a system of regional organs, which derive their authority from the centre, and by the periodical inspections of visiting officials directly responsible to the Communist International.

(c) *Its realism.*

The sternly realistic and practical outlook of the movement—its complete avoidance of idealism—is a factor which compels attention. Communism does not aim at spreading the knowledge of its own solvents for mankind's most pressing problems; it seeks to impose those solvents upon mankind. It exacts from its propagandists results in terms, *not* of conversion to ideas, but of *action* consequent upon those ideas.

(d) *Its absolutism.*

Communism is an absolutist (*cf.* Bolshevik) movement in the fullest sense. It tolerates no partial acceptance, just as it permits no variation, to suit the extent to which and the form in which its doctrines may be locally acceptable. The full programme of the Communist International must be accepted in its entirety and acted upon implicitly without stint or modification.

(7) When the full programme of the Communist International and the methods prescribed for its achievement are examined, it is clear why civilisation, normally tolerant of the free ventilation of ideas, has been constrained to treat Communism "lone among the world movements with open opposition, or, at best, a deeply suspicious tolerance. Organised Communism, though it may conceal many of its operations, is not at all prone to hide its fundamental purposes. "The aim of the Communist International," writes Harry Pollitt, the leader of the Communist Party of Great Britain, "is to organise an armed struggle for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and the establishment of an International Soviet Republic as a transition to the complete abolition of the Capitalist State."

In further elucidation, the "Programme of the Communist International" itself is eloquent. It tells us that:

"The conquest of power by the proletariat is a necessary precedent to the establishment of an International Soviet

Republic and this conquest does not mean peacefully capturing the ready-made bourgeois State Machinery by means of a parliamentary majority. . . . The conquest of power by the proletariat is the violent overthrow of bourgeois power, the destruction of the Capitalist State apparatus (bourgeois armies, police, bureaucratic hierarchy, the judiciary, parliaments, etc.), and substituting in its place new organs of the Proletarian power, to serve primarily as instruments for the suppression of exploiters."

As to the *methods*, by which these objects are to be attained, both nationally and internationally, the "Programme" prescribes :

" Strikes and demonstrations, a combination of strikes and armed demonstrations and, finally, the general strike, conjointly with armed insurrection against the State Power of the bourgeoisie. . . . An absolutely essential condition precedent for this form of action is the organisation of the broad masses into militant units . . . and intensified revolutionary work in the Army and Navy."

A clearer view of this programme, based upon a detailed examination of the general and special directives of the Comintern and of the practice of its dependent bodies all over the world, may be gained from the following epitome :

I. *Preparatory Stage (Permeation).*

- (i) Popularisation of the Soviet system in all classes as a sovereign remedy for all social and economic evils, such as poverty, unemployment, low wages, poor housing conditions, etc.
- (ii) Inflammation of the population against the government of the country, the administration of justice, the local authorities, the police, etc.
- (iii) Exploitation of all grievances especially among the industrial and agrarian population and in the Armed Forces.
- (iv) Fomentation of class and race hatred.
- (v) Destruction of religion ("the opium of the people"), as a defensive bulwark against subversive ideas and, as such, an influence inimical to the spread of Communism.
- (vi) Establishment of revolutionary trades unions in all trades, or occupations and the parallel sapping of the influence of reformist trades unions.
- (vii) Establishment of Communist cells in all sections of society, in the Armed Forces, in the Civil Service and at all key points such as dockyards, munitions works, aircraft factories and the Mercantile Marine.

II. *Intermediate Stage (Mobilisation).*

- (i) Dislocation and aggravation of the economic situation by means of strikes, demonstrations, demands on Local Authorities, sabotage.
- (ii) Subversion of the Armed Forces.
- (iii) Militarisation of the masses.
- (iv) Surreptitious arming of the masses

III. *Ante-penultimate Stage (Revolution).*

- (i) A combination of strikes and armed demonstrations.
- (ii) The General Strike.
- (iii) Insurrection against the State Power by the rebellious Armed Forces in combination with the armed masses.
- (iv) Civil War.

IV. *Penultimate Stage (Sovietisation).*

- (i) Establishment of a Soviet Socialist Republic, entailing the annihilation of the existing government and social order and the socialisation of government, private property, industry, labour, the home, education, etc.

V. *Final Stage (World Revolution).*

- (i) The establishment of the Soviet State in several countries, leading to "World Revolution," as a culmination of pressure from the sovietised countries, followed by the establishment of one World Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with Moscow, or some more convenient metropolis subdued to the Muscovite colour, as its capital.

(8) This is no mere paper programme. It is in train and is meeting with varying degrees of success, or failure in practically all countries. Its promotion is in the hands of a bewildering variety of organisations, working on similar, or complementary lines and in open, or secret collaboration, yet differing from one another in accordance with the particular section of society, which it is their special function to mould to the common purpose. They have been ceaselessly at work, in increasing number and with the increased efficiency gained from practical experience, for the last fifteen years; and it is necessary to realise that their methods to-day are as remote from the clumsy tactics of a few years ago as the *modus operandi* of the cosmopolitan crook from that of the common footpad.

Among them are associations framed to work among employees in every branch of industry, among the unemployed, strikers, children and negroes. There is a special International, equipped with social clubs in practically every port, the object of which is to mobilise the entire Mercantile Marine in Communist interests. There are societies designed to draw wide masses into the support and defence of the socialist achievements of the Soviet Union.

A league of educational workers is striving so to permeate the teaching profession that children from infancy shall receive disloyal and subversive education. There are federations and groups connected with sport, the theatre and the cinema, which seek to control the workers' minds in hours of recreation. Carefully disguised groups of Communist propagandists further the Communist cause in University, press, legal and other professional circles. A widely flung organisation fosters racial and colour hatred under the guise of working for the liberation of subject races.

One underground department of the Communist system specialises in obtaining information regarding the output of munitions; another, also secret, conducts persistent revolutionary propaganda among all branches of the Armed Forces. A system of instructional courses in Moscow and elsewhere trains the rank and file of the national sections of the Comintern in the science of revolution and conspiracy, in espionage, in sabotage, in street fighting and in propaganda, so that on return to their own country they may train others, broaden the basis of militant Communism among the masses and put into practical effect what they have learned.

Some of these organisations (*e.g.*, the national Communist Parties themselves and some of their offshoots, such as the Young Communist Leagues) work openly under their Communist colours; others, known as the "United Front" organs, purport to be non-party in composition and attempt to conceal the fact that they are inspired and directed by the Communist International; others, again, work underground and their existence and activities become known to the public only fitfully through some chance arrest, confession, or discovery of papers.

Both the "legal" and "illegal" sides of the movement make a habit of conspiratorial methods with the double object of rendering detection and interference difficult and of veiling the responsibility of the Soviet Government. These methods include the use of couriers, codes, ciphers, cover addresses, secret houses of rendez-vous and a perfected system of forged passports and business papers, which bids fair to reduce the passport and visa systems to futility and render the exclusion of Communist agents from any country a matter of infinite difficulty.

Ancillary to the whole conglomerate arsenal of aggressive Communism is a strident, polyglot, international and national press system, financed in common with the rest of the system from Moscow, whose organs of publicity pour out a constant stream of propaganda, aimed at the sapping of authority and at widening the ambit of Communism in the world at large, especially among the social and racial sections, which the organisations themselves are designed to suborn in detail.

(9) It may be thought—and it is widely stated—that the achievements of the Communist International have, so far, been negligible, or at least quite incommensurate with its lavish expenditure of effort and money. But is this comforting thought correct?

Is it not rather due to the shortness of memory and easy temper of the public mind on the one hand, and of a general want of appreciation on the other? Is it not, above all, due to a corporate disinclination to admit an ugly fact?

There is no doubt that, since the war, Communism *has* changed the course of events in some countries and has considerably affected the life of nations. The revolts in Hungary, Finland and Bavaria, the "André Marty" mutiny, the situation in Canton in 1926 and the Soviet districts and Red Armies in a vast area of present-day China are evidences of success, which are known to all. Less well known, or realised, is the part played by Communism in fomenting, or exploiting the sporadic revolts, mutinies, strikes and other disturbances, which have so gravely retarded the re-establishment of peace and prosperity; cf. the Councils of Action (1921), the General Strike (1926), the street fighting in Birkenhead and Liverpool (1932), the "hunger marches," and the serious extension of mining and transport strikes in Great Britain, the revolutions and civil wars in South America, the so-called "nationalist" ebullitions, suppressed with loss of life, in French Indo-China, the events leading up to the Meerut Conspiracy Case in British India, the imitative organisation known as the "Red Shirts" on the North-West Frontier of India, the recent combined attack by troops and civilians on the Braganza barracks in Portugal, and the present chaos in Cuba.

Communism may not have produced in all countries spectacular effects such as Civil War, or even the temporary, or local overthrow of established power; its national parties may not be able to boast more than a few thousand members in populations of many millions; in some countries, as in Germany, it may have received a crushing set-back. But the personal suffering, pecuniary loss, industrial confusion, constant disturbance of the public mind, the growth of class antagonism, the decline of individual effort, the weakening of authority, the strikes, demonstrations and civil disturbances, for which the campaign has been responsible, must, though difficult to estimate, be immense in the aggregate.

"The cumulative effect of Communist propaganda, which never ceases, has become a factor of the national life in most countries and cannot be ignored. Apart from the fact that minorities usually exercise an influence unrelated to their size, the Communist movement is an arsenal in which are weapons of attack on every phase of national life—an arsenal controlled by an enemy Power, to which human life is of no account and which is as immune from religious control as from all restrictions imposed by a civilisation which it refuses to acknowledge."

(10) *Realistically viewed, Communism is an international criminal conspiracy and it is as such, rather than as a political movement, that the Security authorities of every country must treat it. Moreover, it is a conspiracy, in regard to which Great Britain, with its enormous responsibilities both as a key-point of stability in a sadly shaken Europe and the guardian of the*

destinies of many races and many millions of souls, would seem to have a special duty.

Unfortunately the criminal law of Great Britain, as of most of the countries which are marked out for special attack by the Communist International, were not framed and are inadequate to keep this modern menace in control, while public opinion is so obstinately averse to anything savouring of that bugbear of democracy, "suppressive" measures, as to render the passage of adequate legislation a process of infinite difficulty. By themselves the public manifestations of the movement—the strident denunciations of governmental policy, the savage pamphleteering campaigns on any and every subject, the quasi-libellous articles, the subversive speeches and resolutions even the strikes and demonstrations—have a certain legitimacy as the outward and visible signs of the party system. Subversive though their character may be, it is not so clamantly subversive as to goad parliamentary bodies to an admission of dangers, with which the long established law is too feeble to cope.

The steady underground work, moreover, which is the spear-head of the Communist attack, does not, and is not meant to, attract attention. It rarely manifests itself in the form of incidents sufficiently scandalous to compel attention, as much because the law is inadequate to bring the offenders to justice as because the object of the underground conspiracy is to remain underground, until it can break surface with success. Should the secret side of militant communism become sufficiently obvious to attract serious parliamentary notice, it may be assumed that it would then be too late to deal with its results except by the use of armed force.

In the absence of legal instruments by which the movement can be effectively sterilised, *the alternative would seem to be the exercise of ceaseless vigilance over its every branch and phase.* To be adequate, this vigilance must be maintained not only within the coast-line of Great Britain, her Dominions and Dependencies, but in every country, in which Communism has established itself, especially in its central power-house at Moscow and in the countries outside Russia, which have become its relay, or transmission, stations. It must not stop short at recording the organisation, public policy, utterances and activities of the so-called "legal" side, but must be especially directed to elucidating and keeping track of its "illegal" counterpart, the underground courier and relay systems, and the various "apparatuses" responsible for military training, sabotage, espionage and the "disintegration" of the Armed Forces. Nor again should this surveillance be confined to the *organisations*, but must identify and keep track also of their *individual members*. Since Communism knows no frontiers, yet is centrally directed, it follows that no detail, whether organisational, or personal, whatever the country, or the sphere, can be safely ignored as irrelevant to any one of the countries affected by the general conspiracy.

This is obviously no light task, especially since the shape, methods, distribution and personnel of the movement are constantly

changing in response to the pressure of general, or local, circumstances ; but those charged with the task may find it considerably simplified, if they obtain a thorough working knowledge of the main objects of Communism and the main lines, upon which its propaganda campaign is organised and directed.

Something in the nature of an International Police force to combat Communism, or, at least, the measure of international co-operation, which has been achieved in connexion with the surveillance of the traffic in narcotics, would seem to be called for. Officially this may not be feasible on diplomatic grounds, in view of the accusation of "encirclement" it would illogically but inevitably elicit from the Soviet Government. In its absence, much may be done by purely unofficial liaison between the Security services of the countries, which are the objects of the Communist attack.

It is to be remembered that only by collecting and collating regular, accurate and detailed information from all quarters of the world can the Security authorities form a sufficiently clear view of the potentialities of the conspiracy, generally and locally to be in a position to anticipate and prevent its more disastrous consequences.

APPENDIX II.

(Referred to on page 171.)

DRAFT PLATFORM OF ACTION OF THE C. P. OF INDIA.

PART I.

Main Tasks of the Indian Revolution.

The Indian people is groaning under the yoke and the exploitation of British imperialism. Relying upon their political and economic supremacy, and squeezing billions of rupees year by year out of the miserable national income of India, the blood-thirsty imperialists have brought the toiling masses of the people to a state of famine, hopeless poverty, intolerable slavery and mass extinction as a people.

With all the power of the State in its hands, controlling the main branches of industry, railways, sea and river transport, banks and the credit system, the greater part of the land, forests and the irrigation system, British imperialism has retarded and still obstructs the economic development of our country in every way, supporting and relying upon all that is backward and reactionary in town and country.

The supremacy of British imperialism is the basis of the backwardness, poverty and endless suffering of our people. Only by the merciless and violent destruction of the political and economic supremacy of the British imperialists will the working masses of India succeed in rising to their feet, achieving their independence and creating the conditions requisite for their further development, and for the reconstruction of society in the interests of the workers and peasants, and with the purpose of developing further towards Socialism.

In the enslavement of the Indian people British imperialism relies upon the native princes, the landlords, the moneylenders and the merchants, utilising the assistance of the national *bourgeoisie*. The system of landownership by the landlords, native princes and moneylenders, and the relics of serfdom in the land system of India (and consequently in all India's social and political institutions) represent the main bulwark of British supremacy.

In order to destroy the slavery of the Indian people and emancipate the working class and the peasants from the poverty

which is crushing them down, it is essential to win the independence of the country and to raise the banner of agrarian revolution, which would smash the system of landlordism surviving from the middle ages and would cleanse the whole of the land from all this mediæval rubbish. An agrarian revolution against British capitalism and landlordism must be the basis for the revolutionary emancipation of India.

Linked up as it is with the system of landlordism and usury, and terrified at the thought of a revolutionary insurrection by the toiling masses, the capitalist class has long ago betrayed the struggle for the independence of the country and the radical solution of the agrarian problem. Its present "opposition" represents merely manoeuvres with British imperialism, calculated to swindle the mass of the toilers and at the same time to secure the best possible terms of compromise with the British robbers. The assistance granted to British imperialism by the capitalist class and its political organisation, the National Congress, takes the shape at the present time of a consistent policy of compromise with British imperialism at the expense of the people, it takes the form of the disorganisation of the revolutionary struggle against the native States, the system of landlordism and the reinforced exploitation, jointly with the imperialists, of the mass of the people, of the working class in particular. The greatest threat to the victory of the Indian revolution is the fact that great masses of our people still harbour illusions about the National Congress and have not realised that it represents a class organisation of the capitalists working against the fundamental interests of the toiling masses of our country.

The policy of Gandhism, on which the programme of the Congress is founded, uses the cloak of vague phrases about love, meekness, modest and hardworking existence, lightening the burden on the peasantry, national unity, the special historic mission of Hinduism, etc. But under this cloak it preaches and defends the interests of the Indian capitalists, the inevitability and wisdom of the division of society into rich and poor, eternal social inequality and exploitation. That is, it preaches the interests of the capitalist development of India, on the bones and the sweat of the working masses of the people, in alliance with world imperialism. The National Congress betrayed and disorganised the struggle of the toilers in 1919-21. The National Congress supported the manufacturers against the workers during the textile strikes and in fact assisted in the passing of anti-labour legislation. The National Congress refused to support the fight of the railwaymen against British imperialism, suggesting that they should ask Lord Irwin and MacDona'd to arbitrate. The National Congress opposed the peasantry in their struggle against the moneylenders, the big landlords and the native princes.

Jointly with the Liberals, the landlords and the manufacturers, the National Congress has produced the anti-popular Nehru Constitution, in which it declared the necessity of preserving the landlords, the rajahs and the moneylenders, remaining as a junior

partner in the British Empire and leaving supreme authority in the hands of the British Viceroy and the Governor General.

The National Congress issued the Delhi Manifesto supporting Gandhi's eleven points, which represented the moderate programme of the Chambers of Commerce and similar associations. It carried on negotiations with the Liberals in prison, trying behind the scenes to come to an understanding with the British Government, and so forth. The National Congress, and particularly its "Left" Wing, have done and are doing all in their power to restrain the struggle of the masses within the framework of the British imperialist Constitution and legislation.

In this connection—world history and the lessons of the class struggle in India prove that only the leadership of the working class can ensure the fulfilment of the historic task of emancipating the Indian people, abolishing national slavery, sweeping aside all the fetters which check national development, confiscating the land and effecting far-reaching democratic reconstruction of a revolutionary character. The working class of India, organised by the industrial process itself and by the class struggle, will, under the leadership of its Communist vanguard, perform its historic task of organising the scattered masses of peasantry and town poor for struggle against British domination and landlordism.

But in order to organise the mass of the workers; in order to rally the proletariat as a distinct class force, conscious of its distinct class interest and fighting for the leadership of the national movement for emancipation; in order to bring about the revolutionary alliance of the working class and the peasantry; in order to liberate the working class, the peasantry and the town poor from the hands of national reformism and direct their revolutionary struggle towards an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution—for all these purposes the working class requires its own proletarian Communist Party.

The Communist Party of India is the party of the working class, the final aim of which is the achievement of Socialism and ultimately of complete Communism. The programme of the Communist Party of India is totally different in principle from the programmes and ideas of the other parties and groups, which are parties of the capitalist class and petty *bourgeoisie*, not excepting the national revolutionary parties. While the latter are striving for the development of capitalism in India, the Communist Party is consistently and firmly fighting for a Socialist path of development. While the national revolutionary groups are fighting for *bourgeois* rule and a *bourgeois* form of government the C. P. of India is fighting for the democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry, a Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government in India.

The only form of government which can safeguard the interests of the workers, peasants and toilers generally is the Soviets. The Soviets, set up in the course of the revolutionary revolt of the

working masses, as insurrectionary bodies for the overthrow of British supremacy, will be the sole genuine seats of authority, elected directly in the factories, works, villages, etc., ensuring confiscation of the land and the satisfaction of the vital needs of the mass of the people. The Soviet Government alone will be capable of ensuring to national minorities their right to self-determination, including that of complete separation, and at the same time achieving the maximum unity in the ranks of the toilers of various nationalities engaged in common revolutionary struggle against the enemies of the Indian revolution. The Soviet Government alone will be able to effect an alliance with the world proletariat for the purpose of defending the liberty and the achievements of the Indian revolution against the attacks of world imperialism and the Indian exploiters. Only such a government will be able to make an alliance with all other Soviet States against international imperialism and for the final victory of the world revolution.

Firmly and courageously, and notwithstanding any sacrifices, the Communist Party will defeat the disorganising and treacherous work of the national reformists. It will organise the masses of workers and peasants and lead them to victory over imperialism, and take the lead in the further march towards Socialism.

Adopting these as its guiding principles, the C. P. of India advances the following main objects for the present stage of the Indian revolution :—

- (1) The complete independence of India by the violent overthrow of British rule. The cancellation of all debts. The confiscation and nationalisation of all British factories, banks, railways, sea and river transport and plantations.
- (2) Establishment of a Soviet Government. The realisation of the right of national minorities to self-determination including separation. Abolition of the native states. The creation of an Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.
- (3) The confiscation without compensation of all the lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princes, churches, the British Government, officials and moneylenders, and handing over for use to the toiling peasantry. Cancellation of slave agreements and all the indebtedness of the peasantry to moneylenders and banks.
- (4) The 8-hour working day and the radical improvement of conditions of labour. Increase in wages and State maintenance for the unemployed.

The Communist Party of India will fight for these main demands, which express the interests of the mass of the people, and the achievement of which will create the conditions for, and render possible further development in the direction of, the building of a Socialist State of society in India. At the same time,

with the object of developing the mass revolutionary struggle and revolutionary education of the mass of the toilers, the C. P. of India puts forward partial demands, the struggle for which will facilitate the mobilisation of the mass of the people in revolutionary insurrection for its emancipation.

PART II.

The Fight for Partial Demands of the Revolutionary Movement.

The C. P. of India considers that the sole and historically tested means of winning independence, carrying out the agrarian revolution and achieving democratic reconstruction, is the path of the revolutionary struggle of the widest possible mass of the people, developing into a general national armed insurrection against the British exploiters and all their allies in our country.

The propaganda of non-violence of Gandhi, Nehru and the other leaders of the National Congress is intended to prevent a general national armed insurrection of the toiling masses against British rule. By his own confession in his autobiography, Gandhi took part in the armed suppression of the rising of the Zulu peasants in Africa and assisted the British robbers in their fight against the German capitalists for the right to exploit colonial peoples. Gandhi recruited Indian peasants into the British army, and sent to their deaths hundreds of thousands of Indian workers and peasants in the interests of the British robbers. And to-day Gandhi tells the peasants and workers of India that they have no right to, and must not, revolt against their exploiters. He tells them this at the very time when the British robbers are making open war on the Indian people in the North-West Province and throughout the country.

The toiling masses will understand this double game of the National Congress. The workers and peasants of India will not give up their right to smash the whole feudal and imperialist system of exploitation, and their right to bring about the violent overthrow of British rule.

This emancipation of India cannot be achieved by a terrorist movement. The supporters of the terrorist movement of our country do not see and do not believe in the struggle of the broad masses of the people, and do not understand the connection between the agrarian revolution, the struggle of the working class and the overthrow of British domination. They try by brave and single-handed terrorist acts to achieve victory over British imperialism.

While recognising the devotion and self-sacrifice of the terrorists in the cause of the national emancipation of India, the Communist Party declares that the road to victory is not the method of individual terror but the struggle and the revolutionary armed insurrection of the widest possible masses of the working class, the peasantry, the poor of the towns and the Indian soldiers, around the banner and under the leadership of the Communist Party of India.

The most harmful and dangerous obstacle to the victory of the Indian revolution is the agitation carried on by the "Left" elements of the National Congress, led by Jawahar Lal Nehru, Bose, Gopinath and others. Under the cloak of revolutionary phraseology, they carry on the *bourgeois* policy of confusing and disorganising the revolutionary struggle of the masses, and help the Congress to come to an understanding with British imperialism. Particularly blackguardly and harmful is the part played by the national reformists in the labour movement, in which they try in every possible way to substitute the methods of class collaboration for the method of class struggle, doing their best to bring the workers under the influence of the ideas and the organisations of the Indian and British exploiters. The treacherous part played by the National Congress as regards the peasantry has once again shown itself in the appeal of the "Left" Congress leaders to the British Governor-General of Bengal to send troops to crush the peasants' revolts at Kishoreganj. In these circumstances some of the "Left" national reformists (supporters of Roy and others), who realise that the masses are becoming disillusioned in the Congress have cleverly put forward the advice to "win" the National Congress from within. Nominally their object is to revolutionize the Congress, in reality it is to restore the prestige of the Congress by replacing the old treacherous leaders by new leaders who are no better than the old.

The exposure of the "Left" Congress leaders, who may again undertake to set up a new party or organisation like the former League of Independence, in order once again to bamboozle the mass of the workers, is the primary task of our Party. Ruthless war on the "Left" national reformists is an essential condition if we are to isolate the latter from the workers and mass of the peasantry and mobilise the latter under the banner of the Communist Party and the anti-imperialist agrarian revolution in India.

The Communist Party of India calls upon all the toilers to form a united front against the imperialists, the landlords, the moneylenders and the capitalists. The C. P. of India calls upon the Moslem and Indian workers and peasants not to be tricked by the cunning provocative methods of the British Government and the reactionary native exploiters, who set the toilers of different nationalities and religious beliefs against one another and provoke conflicts between them. The C. P. of India calls upon all the toilers, including the untouchables (pariahs) not to permit such disorganisation and splitting of the united revolutionary front of the oppressed, who suffer equally at the hands of their own and British exploiters.

In its struggle to win leadership of the masses, the C. P. of India calls upon its supporters to make resolute use of any legal and semi-legal opportunity for public action and mobilisation of the masses around working class slogans. On every occasion they must expose the treacherous part played by the National Congress. Against the *bourgeois* front of compromise established by

the national reformists, they must create the united front of the toilers from below, on the basis of definite proletarian revolutionary demands and activities.

As one of the practical means of explaining to the toiling masses the exploiting and treacherous policy of the Congress leaders, the C. P. of India recommends to its supporters to make use of their activity in the trade unions, municipal councils (Calcutta, Bombay, etc.) and similar institutions.

The C. P. of India calls upon its supporters and organisations to develop mass revolutionary activities and the struggle of the working class for their political and economic demands, mass refusal by the peasants to pay taxes, levies, rent, debts, particularly in districts where there are large landed estates—thereby mobilising and preparing the mass of the toilers for revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The C. P. of India calls upon all class-conscious workers and revolutionaries to assist in transforming individual strikes of the workers into a general political strike, as a resolute step in organising the revolutionary struggle of the mass of the people for independence, land and a Workers' and Peasants' Government under the guidance of the working class.

A. General Demands.

In order to develop mass revolutionary struggle and the political training of the people, the C. P. of India puts forward and fights for the following demands :

- (1) Expulsion of the British troops, abolition of the police and general armament of the toilers.
- (2) Immediate liberation of all political prisoners, including those who have committed acts of individual and mass violence.
- (3) Unlimited freedom of speech, conscience, press, meeting, strikes and association for the toilers, and abolition of all anti-popular and anti-labour laws (Trades Disputes Act, the prohibition of picketing, the regulations for the deportation of revolutionary workers, Press Act, etc.).
- (4) The abolition of rank, caste, national and communal privileges, and the full equality of all citizens irrespective of sex, religion and race.
- (5) Complete separation of religion from the State, and the expulsion of the missionaries as direct agents of the imperialists, with confiscation of their property.
- (6) Complete separation of religion from the State, and at any time on the demand of the majority of the electors.

B. Special Workers' Demands.

In order to organise the widest masses of the working class, defend the day-to-day interests of the workers and maintain the general revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses in our country, the C. P. of India calls upon all class-conscious workers to

concentrate every effort on the creation of a revolutionary trade union movement. The C. P. of India deems it essential to organise mass trade unions based on factory committees, with the leadership elected directly by the workers and consisting of advanced revolutionary workers. The trade unions must become regularly functioning mass organisations, working in the spirit of the class struggle, and all efforts must be made to expel and isolate reformists of all shades, from the open agents of British capitalism such as Joshi, Chamanlal, Giri, etc., to the sham "Left" national reformists such as Bose, Ruikar, Ginwalla and other agents of the Indian *bourgeoisie*, who constitute a reactionary bloc for joint struggle against the revolutionary wing of the trade union movement. At the same time the C. P. of India works for the transformation of the All-India Trade Union Congress into a fighting all-India centre of the labour movement on a class basis.

I. The C. P. of India calls upon all its supporters and all class-conscious workers to help in organising factory committees in all factories, railways, docks, etc., throughout the country. In cases where, owing to the victimisation of the employers or British authorities, the factory committees have to work semi-legally, the C. P. advocates putting forward the demand for recognition of the factory committees as one of the principal demands in strike movements. The C. P. of India calls for the country-wide organisation of workers' defence detachments, both to defend workers' strikes and demonstrations and to take part in the general revolutionary struggle.

II. The C. P. of India calls upon all class-conscious workers to help the Party to organise the movement and the struggle of the unemployed for regular relief at the expense of the State and the employers. It calls for the country-wide organisation of unemployed councils, demonstrations and joint struggle with the workers in industry for the partial demands of the unemployed—monthly unemployment benefit at the minimum cost of living, refusal to pay rent, free supply of fuel and foodstuffs by the municipal authorities, etc.

III. Taking note of the semi-slave conditions of plantation and agricultural workers, the C. P. of India calls upon class-conscious workers to take part and assist in the organisation of trade unions of plantation and agricultural workers. The fight for complete abolition of all systems of serfdom, compulsory and contract labour, deprivation of rights and unprecedented exploitation of the agricultural proletariat is one of our main aims, linked up closely with the aim of mobilising the broad masses of peasantry to fight imperialist and feudal exploitation, under the leadership of the working class.

IV. With the object of protecting the working class from physical and moral degeneration, and also in order to raise its capacity to fight for emancipation, the C. P. of India fights for :

- (1) Limitation of the working day to 8 hours for adults and 6 hours for youths from 1 to 20. Introduction of the

6-hour working day in all harmful industries, including coal mining, and free supply of milk and butter to the workers in these industries.

- (2) Complete freedom of trade unions, demonstrations, picketing and strikes.
- (3) Equal pay for equal work for women, youths and men.
- (4) Complete abolition of compulsory contract labour and systems of legal bondage of the workers.
- (5) A compulsory weekly rest period on full pay and a paid annual holiday of 4 weeks for adults and 6 weeks for youths.
- (6) State insurance against unemployment, sickness, accidents, industrial diseases, old age, loss of working capacity and orphanage and compensation for disablement.
- (7) Establishment of a State minimum wage of 50 rupees a month, prohibition of the contract system and establishment by law of weekly payment of wages.
- (8) Prohibition of deductions from wages for any reason or purpose whatsoever (fines, bad work, etc.).
- (9) Introduction of properly organised factory inspection, workers being elected members thereof, to supervise labour conditions in all factories employing hired labour.
- (10) The abolition of the system of hiring workers through jobbers, sarangs, etc., employment and dismissal of workers to take place through labour exchanges, controlled and supervised by the trade unions. The abolition of all caste and feudal customs and regulations within the factories.

In addition, the C. P. of India supports and fights for each and every demand intended to improve the conditions of the workers (building of new houses at Government or employers' expense, provision of proper lavatories,—clean dining rooms, etc.).

The C. P. of India is definitely against the principle of arbitration and interference by capitalist arbitration courts. It emphasises most definitely that the sole means of winning any serious concessions on the part of the exploiters is resolute class struggle by strikes and mass revolutionary activities.

C. Peasant Demands.

I. The C. P. of India fights for the confiscation without compensation of all land and estates, forests and pastures of the native princes, landlords, moneylenders and the British Government, and their transference to peasant committees for use by the toiling masses of the peasantry. The C. P. of India fights for the complete wiping out of the mediæval system of landholding, to cleanse the whole of the land from the rubbish of the middle ages.

II. The C. P. of India fights for the immediate confiscation of all plantations and their transference to revolutionary committees elected by the plantation workers. The allotments to which the planters assign their contract workers and also the land not in cultivation, to be handed over to the labourers and poor peasants as their property. At the same time the C. P. of India is in favour of the nationalisation of large-scale mechanically equipped plantations, and workshops connected therewith, for utilisation in the interests of the whole Indian people.

III. The C. P. of India fights for the immediate nationalisation of the whole system of irrigation, complete cancellation of all indebtedness and taxes, and the transference of the control and supervision of the work of irrigation to revolutionary peasant committees elected by the working peasantry.

IV. In order to disorganise British rule and maintain revolutionary pressure against it, the C. P. of India calls upon the peasantry and agricultural proletariat to engage in all kinds of political demonstrations and collective refusal to pay taxes and dues, or to carry out the orders and decisions of the Government and its agents.

V. The C. P. of India calls for refusal to pay rent, irrigation charges or other exactions, and refusal to carry out any labour services whatsoever (*begar*) for the landlords, native princes and their agents.

VI. The C. P. of India calls for refusal to pay debts and arrears to Government, the landlords and the moneylenders in any form whatsoever.

VII. As a practical watchword for the campaign among the peasantry, and as a means of developing more political consciousness in the peasant movement, the C. P. of India calls for the immediate organisation of revolutionary peasant committees in order to carry on a fight to achieve all the revolutionary democratic changes required in the interests of emancipating the peasantry from the yoke of British imperialism and its feudal allies.

VIII. The C. P. of India calls for the independent organisation of the agricultural proletariat, particularly the plantation workers, and its amalgamation with the proletariat of the towns under the banner of the Communist Party, as well as its representation in the peasant committees.

The C. P. of India is firmly convinced that the complete thoroughgoing and permanent achievement of the above-mentioned political and social changes is possible only by the overthrow of British domination and the creation of a Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.

D. Emancipation of the Pariahs and the Slaves.

As a result of the rule of British imperialism in our country, there are still in existence millions of slaves and tens of millions of socially outcast working pariahs, who are deprived of all rights.

British rule, the system of landlordism, the reactionary caste system, religious deception and all the slave and serf traditions of the past throttle the Indian people and stand in the way of its emancipation. They have led to the result that in India, in the twentieth century, there are still pariahs who have no right to meet with all their fellow men, drink from common wells, study in common schools, etc.

Instead of putting an end once and for all to this shameful blot on the Indian people, Gandhi and the other Congress leaders call for the maintenance of the caste system, which is the basis and justification for the existence of the socially outcast pariahs.

Only the ruthless abolition of the caste system in its reformed, Gandhi-ist variety, only the agrarian revolution and the violent overthrow of British rule, will lead to the complete social, economic, cultural and legal emancipation of the working pariahs and slaves.

The C. P. of India calls upon all the pariahs to join in the united revolutionary front with all the workers of the country against British rule and landlordism.

The C. P. of India calls on the pariahs not to give way to the tricks of the British and reactionary agents who try to split and set one against the other the toilers of our country.

The C. P. of India fights for the complete abolition of slavery, the caste system and caste inequality in all its forms (social, cultural, etc.). The C. P. of India fights for the complete and absolute equality of the working pariahs and all the toilers of our country.

E. Struggle for the Interests of the Town and Petty Bourgeoisie.

The C. P. of India calls upon the working small producers in the towns to support the revolutionary struggle against British domination, the landlords, the Princes and the money-lenders.

The capitalist class and the National Congress, in their search for a compromise with imperialism, are betraying the interests not only of the workers and peasants but also of wide sections of the town petty *bourgeoisie* (artisans, street traders, etc.).

Only the complete abolition of British rule, bringing in its train the liberation of our country, the radical alteration of the whole policy of the Government, and the abolition of landlordism and survivals of serfdom throughout the Indian social order, will create the conditions requisite for developing the economic life of the town petty *bourgeoisie*, handicraft workers and town poor.

The C. P. of India fights for the cancellation of all the usury which has enslaved the poor people of the towns. The C. P. of India fights for the cancellation of all direct and indirect taxes, excise, and other forms of taxation of wages and small earnings, which are ruining the artisans, street traders, employees, etc. It stands for the replacement of such taxes by a progressive

income-tax on the capitalists, bond holders, banks and inheritance. The C.P. of India fights for all revolutionary measures which serve the interests of the proletariat and are intended to improve the conditions of the town poor.

F. Emancipation of the Toiling Women.

The toiling women of India are in a semi-servile condition under a double burden of the survivals of feudalism and economic, cultural and legal inequality. The toiling women have no right whatsoever to determinate their fate, and in many districts are forced to drag out their existence in purdah, under the veil, and without the right not only of participating in public affairs, but even of freely and openly meeting their fellow citizens and moving through the streets.

At the same time the exploitation and working conditions of the women workers are surely unheard of in their brutality and sweated character. The semi-slave conditions of women in India are the result of the widespread survival of relics of feudalism throughout the social order of the country and its careful preservation by British imperialism.

Noting that the present bourgeois national women's organisation, the "All-India Women's Conference" led by Sarojini Naidu, one of the leaders of the National Congress, is not carrying on a genuine struggle to emancipate women but in reality is co-operating with British imperialism, the C. P. of India calls upon the working masses of India to join the common revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses, under the leadership of the Communist Party, for the overthrow of the social order and social system which give rise to the slave conditions of Indian women.

The C. P. of India fights for the complete social, economic and legal equality of women. It fights for the complete abolition of night work for women and the prohibition of underground work for women (in the coal mines) and in all branches harmful for females.

The C. P. of India fights for leave of absence from work at full rates of wages two months before and two months after childbirth, with free medical aid, and for the establishment of crèches in all factories and workshops employing women, at the expense of the employers, such crèches to cover small children and infants at the breast, with a special apartment for feeding. Nursing mothers to have their working day reduced to 6 hours.

G. Soldiers' Demands.

I. In the struggle for the emancipation of our country the C. P. of India calls for the spreading of revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers and police, and the explanation of the necessity for their armed insurrection together with the toiling masses of the country against British rule.

II. The Indian soldiers and police are, socially, in the main, poor peasants who have been forced to seek employment in the

army by poverty, landlessness and hunger. The C.P. of India fights for the allotment of land to the soldiers equally with all the other toiling peasants. The C.P. of India calls upon its supporters to explain to the soldiers and ex-soldiers that the only means of acquiring land, abolishing indebtedness and getting work is the revolutionary overthrow of British and feudal supremacy.

III. The C.P. of India calls upon its organisations and class-conscious workers and revolutionaries to begin organising revolutionary groups among the soldiers. The aim of these groups must be to persuade and prepare the soldiers to take action in support of a general armed insurrection of the people for liberty, land and a Workers' and Peasants' Government. It is necessary to explain to the soldiers by concrete examples drawn from their daily lives (arbitrary actions by the officers, shooting down of demonstrators, workers' strikes, etc., flagrant inequality of treatment of white and Indian soldiers—worse food, clothes, allowances, etc.) that Indian soldiers are only a blind tool in the hands of the British robbers, who use them to maintain the national and social oppression of the toiling masses of our country.

IV. The C.P. of India calls upon its supporters to organise the ex-soldiers, who have had practical proof of the swindling and exploiting character of British rule, and to build up revolutionary ex-soldiers' organisations among them and, wherever possible, fighting detachments to prepare and support the future national insurrection and agrarian movement under the leadership of the Party.

V. The C.P. of India calls upon the class-conscious workers to organise fraternisation with Indian soldiers, with the object of establishing closest friendship and explaining the solidarity of the interests of workers, peasants and soldiers in the fight for freedom and the abolition of all forms of exploitation.

H. Youth Demands.

I. The C.P. of India calls upon the revolutionary working class youth to build up the Young Communist League. The Young Communist League of India, being an illegal organisation owing to the complete lack of rights and the prevailing terror, has as its object to organise the widest possible masses of working class, peasant and revolutionary student youth around the banner of the Communist Party, doing so either directly or through the medium of auxiliary, legal and semi-legal mass organisations (youth sections in the trade unions, etc.).

II. The Y.C.L. of India as the helper of the Party has the special task of organising the working youth under the banner of Communism. The Y.C.L. of India must come forward as a political organisation which subordinates all forms of struggle and mass organisations—economic, cultural, sports, etc.—to the interests of the political struggle, namely, the overthrow of the imperialist yoke and the winning of power by the working class and the peasantry.

III. The C.P. of India calls for the country-wide organisation both of mixed and of separate workers', peasants' and students' detachments, both to defend the people's demonstrations, strikes, etc., and in order to make systematic preparations for the armed struggle of the Indian people.

IV. The C.P. of India calls upon the honest revolutionary youth to help in spreading political propaganda among the soldiers and police. The C.P. of India considers that the call of the "Left", nationalists to the soldiers to leave the army and take their discharge, in accordance with Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, is a mistake. The task of genuine revolutionaries is to persuade the soldiers, while staying in the army, to prepare and raise, when the time is ripe, the banner of armed insurrection and, shoulder to shoulder with the toiling people, overthrow British rule.

V. With the object of protecting the toiling youth against physical and cultural degeneration, and in order to develop its revolutionary offensive for the national and social liberation of the toiling masses, the C.P. of India fights for :

- (a) Limitation of the working day to 6 hours for youths from 16 to 20. Prohibition of employment of children under 16.
- (b) Universal free and compulsory education up to 16 in the national language of the pupils. Free feeding, clothing and supply of text-books to children at the expense of the State. Introduction of vocational training for youths at the expense of the State and the employers.
- (c) Paid weekly and annual (6 weeks) holiday for youths.
- (d) State maintenance of unemployed youths at rates equivalent to the cost of living.

Conclusion.

The Communist Party of India, putting forward its programme of demands of the Indian revolution, calls upon the toiling masses to rally under the revolutionary banner of the Party and carry on the struggle to the successful conquest of power and the establishment of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry in the form of Soviets.

The C.P. of India declares that the successful solution of the problems facing the revolution against feudalism and for emancipation will open up the possibility, with the help of the international proletariat and the class offensive of the exploited masses of our country, of the revolution developing through a number of stages into a proletarian revolution, thereby creating the requisite conditions for the development of our country on socialist lines, avoiding the further stage of domination of the capitalist system.

In this struggle the Indian people are not alone. They have an ally in the revolutionary workers of all countries in the world. The workers of the whole world are fighting for the overthrow of international imperialism and the abolition of the whole system of capitalist exploitation, which is now going through a very profound crisis. The crisis of the feudal and capitalist system of exploitation in India is at present being combined with the world crisis, which leads to the great sharpening of all antagonisms, the approach of wars, and the rise of a new wave of revolutionary struggles.

The growing crisis is producing the growth of stubborn resistance and counter-offensive on the part of the international proletariat and the colonial peoples. The strength of the international revolution is growing. In one of the countries of the world, Soviet Russia, the working class has long ago overthrown the power of the exploiters and is successfully building up a socialist state of society. The workers of the Soviet Union have created a firm bulwark of the international Communist movement, and are showing in practice how the world ought to be reconstructed in the interests of the workers and peasants. The Soviet Union is a reliable ally of the colonial peoples, including the toilers of India. The toiling masses of India will receive the support of the revolutionary workers of all countries, particularly of the developing Chinese revolution. The toiling masses of India will also be supported by the revolutionary workers of Great Britain, led by the British Communist Party, while the ruling Labour Party of MacDonald and the Independent Labour Party of Maxton and Brockway, who are part and parcel and agents of British imperialism, will do everything in their power to tighten and maintain the noose of slavery and poverty round the neck of the Indian people. In spite of all the devices of the imperialists and their reformist agents, the revolutionary front of the world proletariat and the colonial peoples is growing stronger and wider every day.

But to ensure the victory of the Indian revolution, there is required a Communist Party of the proletariat, the leader and organiser of the toiling masses of our country. The building of a centralised, disciplined, united, mass, underground Communist Party is to-day the chief and basic task, long ago overdue, of the revolutionary movement for the emancipation of our country.

The C. P. of India declares with pride that it considers itself a part of the organised world Communist movement, a section of the Communist International. The C. P. of India calls upon all advanced workers and revolutionaries devoted to the cause of the working class to join the ranks of the Communist Party now being built, in order to fight to carry out the historic tasks of the Indian revolution. In the conditions of British supremacy and terrorism, the Communist Party can only exist and develop as an underground party, applying and utilising all forms of legal and illegal activity to develop its mass struggle, and to win the toiling masses for the fight for the democratic dictatorship of the working

class and of the peasantry. The Communist Party of India sets up its party organisations and groups in all towns and in all factories and workshops throughout the country.

The Communist Party of India organises the working class and the basic masses of the peasantry under the banner of the Indian revolution. In spite of all difficulties, sacrifices and partial defeats, in spite of all the attempts of the imperialists and the Indian *bourgeoisie* to separate the revolutionary movement of India from the international proletariat, the Communist Party will lead the struggle of the toiling masses to the complete overthrow of British rule and of the system of landlordism and serfdom. In order thereafter, together with the world proletariat, to march forward in the struggle to set up a socialist system of society in our country and throughout the world.

Long live the independence of India !

Long live the working class, the leader of the toiling masses !

Long live the revolutionary insurrection for independence, land and bread !

Long live the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government !

Long live the World Revolution !

APPENDIX III.

(Referred to on page 209.)

Extract from the *International Press Correspondence* dated the 11th May 1934.

DRAFT OF THE PROVISIONAL STATUTES OF THE C. P. OF INDIA.*

(SECTION OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.)

The Communist Party of India, being a section of the Communist International, is the most advanced organised section of the proletariat of India, the highest form of its class organisation.

The Communist Party of India carries out the leadership of the proletariat, the toiling peasants and all the toiling masses, organising them in the struggle for the victorious anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution, for the formation of a workers' and peasants' government on the basis of the Soviet power, for complete state national independence and for a further struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the full triumph of socialism according to the programme of the Communist International. The Communist Party of India is a united fighting organisation cemented by conscious iron proletarian discipline. The Party is strong in its unity, unity of will and unity of action, which are incompatible with any deviation from the programme, any violation of Party discipline and factional grouping inside the Party.

The Communist Party of India demands from its members active and self-sacrificing work for carrying out the programme of the C. I. and the draft platform of action of the C. P. of India. It demands also the carrying out of the statutes of the Party and fulfilling all the decisions of the Party and its organs, the guarantee of the unity of the ranks of the Party and the strengthening of fraternal international relations both between the toilers of the various nationalities of India and with the proletariat of all countries of the world. The Party works in all the mass organisations of the toilers, including the most reactionary organisations, seeking to win over the toiling masses of members of these organisations to its side and to isolate the reformist, the national reformists, and social-democratic leaders.

*This draft was received from the Provisional Central Committee of the C. P. of India, with a request to publish, and invite comrades to offer their criticism and suggestions. We invite comrades to send in any criticism or suggestions they may have.

In preparing the draft for publication certain expressions have had to be changed.—Ed., *International Press Correspondence*.

(I) Party Members and their duties.

(1) A member of the Party is any person who recognises the programme of the C. I., the draft platform of action of the Communist Party, and who works in one of the Party organisations, obeys the decisions of the Party and the Communist International and regularly pays membership dues.

(2) A member of the Party must :—

- (a) Observe the strictest Party discipline and maintain reticence with regard to secret matters, actively participate in the political life of the Party and the country, carry on in practice the decisions of the Communist International, the Party and the Party organs.
- (b) Tirelessly work to raise his ideological attainments, to master the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and the chief political and organisational decisions of the Party, and explain them to the non-Party masses.
- (c) Be a member of mass organisations (trade unions, etc.), and carry on tireless work there under the leadership of the Party Committee for strengthening the political and organisational influence of the Party.
- (d) Join mass organisations of toilers, trade unions, etc., who are under the influence and leadership of the reformists and national reformists and other opponents, and carry on there a tireless everyday ideological and organisational struggle for liberating the toiling masses from the influence of class enemies, winning these masses to the side of the Communist Party and thus isolating the reformists and the national reformists from the toiling masses.
- (e) Besides participating, organising, and leading the everyday struggles of the workers and peasants for partial demands, to carry on tireless agitation and propaganda among the workers and other toilers, spreading the ideas of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution and the ideas of Communism.

(3) Members are accepted into the Party only individually and through Party cells. Newly recruited Party members must be confirmed by the city committee (or local committee).

(4) If whole groups from other political organisations join the Communist Party, or if whole political organisations want to join the C. P., a proper decision of the Central Committee is required for acceptance.

NOTE.—If leading members from other political parties come over to the Party, in addition to the sanction of the town committee or local committee, it is necessary to have the sanction of the Central Committee.

(5) When accepting a new Party member, he must be vouched for by at least two members of the Party who know him well

both at his place of work and his place of residence. The comrades recommending him are responsible for him, and in case of improper recommendations will be subject to Party disciplinary measures, to the point of exclusion from the Party. When a member of a Communist youth organisation is accepted, a recommendation is required from the corresponding committee of this organisation of which he was a member before joining the Party.

(6) Every member of the Party who works in some local organisation, and is going to work in the area of another local organisation, will be registered by the latter as one of its members.

(7) Members of the Party will go from one district to another according to rules laid down by the Central Committee. The consent of the Central Committee of the Party is required to go to another country.

(8) The question of the expulsion of anyone from the Party is decided by a general meeting of the cell of which the given person is a member, and is confirmed by the town or local committee. Pending the decision of the town committee, the person in question can be removed from Party work.

(9) The following are expelled from the Party : (1) open or concealed supporters of Gandhism, of the Roy group and other political trends condemned by the C. I., as enemies of Communism and as disorganisers and betrayers of the struggle for national independence ; (2) open or concealed violators of the iron discipline of the Party ; (3) those who betray in any way secret Party affairs (it must be remembered that this leads to a position that the Party can be disorganised and Party workers arrested) ; (4) provocateurs, careerists, traitors, morally degenerate people and those who, by their improper conduct, harm the good name and soil the banner of the Party ; (5) class-alien and hostile elements who have crept into the Party by deception, concealing their counter-revolutionary or criminal past or their previous connections with the police.

(II) The Organisational Structure of the Party.

(10) The Party is conducted as a strictly underground organisation. The underground organisations of the Party in their work make it their central task to develop most widely mass work to establish its leadership in the mass revolutionary movements, and with this aim combining the methods of underground work with semi-underground work and open work.

(11) The leading principle of the organisational structure of the Party is democratic centralism, which means :—

- (a) All the leading organs of the Party, from top to bottom, are elected.
- (b) The Party organs periodically report on their work to their Party organisations.

(c) The strictest Party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority.

(d) Decisions of the Comintern and higher Party organs are unquestionably obligatory for lower organs and for all members of the Party.

(12) The Party is built on the foundations of democratic centralism according to the territorial-industrial principle. Organisations which embrace any districts are considered as higher than organisations which embrace part of the given district.

(13) All the Party organisations are autonomous in deciding local questions, providing these decisions do not conflict with the decisions of the Party and the Comintern.

(14) The highest leading organ of every organisation is the general meeting, conference, or congress.

(15) The general meeting, conference, or congress elects a committee, which is their executive organ and guides all the current work of the organisation.

NOTE.—(1) For reasons of underground work, in accordance with the decisions of higher Party committees, the lower Party committee can be formed without elections at the corresponding Party Conference, but by appointment or also by combining election with co-optation, i.e., only a part of the Party committee is elected at the Party conference and the other part of the Party committee is co-optated. (2) For reasons of underground work, it is also permissible for the elections to take place not at the Party conference, but by selecting for the Party committee persons from among the best activists who have been selected in advance by the higher Party Committee from the cells and fractions in mass organisations, trade unions, etc.

(16) The organisational scheme of the Party is as follows:—

(a) Territory of India: All-Indian Party Congress, which elects the Central Committee of C. P. of India.

(b) Province: Provincial Party Conference and Provincial Party Committee.

(c) Town (or Locality): Town (Local) Conference, Town (Local) Committee.

(d) Factory, Chawl or Village: General Meeting of Cell, Bureau, or Organiser of Cells.

(17) Order of Subordination of Party Organs. All-Indian Party Congress, C. C. C. P. of India, Provincial Party Conference, Provincial Party Committee, Town (Local) Party Conference, Town (Local) Party Committee, General Meeting of Cell, Bureau or Organiser of the Cell.

NOTE.—In respect to provinces where a provincial committee has not yet been organised, the C. C. directly leads the local Party organisations, and in places where there are no local organisations

it directly leads the various cells. The same applies to the provincial committees in provinces where local and district committees have not yet been organised everywhere. In such cases the provincial committee directly leads the work of the various cells and local Party organisations.

(III) The Central Organisations of the Party.

(18) The highest organ of the Party is the Congress. Congresses are called if possible once a year. Extraordinary Congresses are called by the Central Committee on its own initiative or at the demand of not less than one-third of the total number of members represented at the last Party Congress. Extraordinary Congresses are called at the expiration of two months.

The Congress is to be considered as having full powers if it has representatives from not less than half the members of the Party represented to the last regular Congress. Representation quotas at the Congress and the method of election are decided by the Central Committee.

NOTE.—If it is impossible to call a Congress of the Party the C. C. will call an enlarged Session of the Plenum of the C. C., with the participation of representatives of the Provincial Committees. Such an enlarged Plenum of the C. C. has the right, by arrangement with the C. I., to change the composition of the C. C.

(19) The Congress (a) discusses and confirms the report of the Central Committee; (b) revises and changes the programme and statutes of the Party; (c) decides on the tactical line of the Party on the basic questions of current politics; (d) elects the Central Committee. During the sittings of the Party Congress a small auditing commission has to be elected, which looks through the financial affairs of the past period, and at the end of the Congress reports the results of its work, and is then dissolved.

(20) The Central Committee is elected by the Congress. In case a member of the Central Committee leaves it, he will be replaced by one of the candidates in the order fixed by the Congress.

NOTE.—The Central Committee has a right to co-opt members to the Central Committee.

(21) The Central Committee organises the Politbureau for current work. The Politbureau appoints a secretary whose task is to guide all the work of the apparatus of the Central Committee, to guide the proper distribution of the Party functionaries and control the fulfilment of the directives of the C. I., the decisions of the Party Congresses and the Central Committee.

(22) The members of the Central Committee are attached as instructors and representatives of the Central Committee to definite provincial organisations and also divide among themselves the various fields of activity of the Central Committee:—

(a) Editor of the Central Party organ.

(b) A manager of the Central technical apparatus and of distribution of literature.

(c) Treasurer.

(d) Head of the work of Party fractions in the mass organisations.

(e) Head of the special apparatus.

(f) Head of the Party educational department.

NOTE.—According to the concrete conditions of work, the Central Committee can combine some of these functions and give to one person, or set up new departments, etc.

NOTE.—Special work must be entirely separated from the general Party work.

(23) The Central Committee leads the whole work of the Party in the interval between the Congresses, represents the Party in its relations with other organisations and institutions, organises various Party institutions and guides their activity, appoints the editor of the Central organ, confirms the secretaries and editors of Party organs of provincial Party committees, distributes the forces and funds of the Party, and is in charge of the Central funds.

(24) With the aim of strengthening the Bolshevik leadership over the work of the local Party organisations, the Central Committee has the right to create in some parts of the country Regional Bureaux of the Central Committee which would include several provinces, to send representatives and instructors to the localities. The Regional Bureaux of the Central Committee, representatives and instructors of the Central Committee must work on the basis of special instructions laid down every time by the Central Committee or the Politbureau.

(25) The Central Committee regularly informs the Party organisation of its general work by sending out special information bulletins and also by sending members and representatives of the Central Committee to the localities to give reports on its work.

(IV) The Provincial Organisations of the Party.

(26) The highest organ of the Provincial Party organisation is the Provincial Party Conference, and in the interval between Conferences the highest organ is the Provincial Party Committee. In its action it must be guided by the decisions of the Congresses of the Communist Party of India and its leading organs.

NOTE.—The Provincial Committee works on the territory included in the administrative boundaries of the province. It might be formed from the town organisation of the main city of the province. When the town organisation of the provincial centre gets strong enough, the town committee, while maintaining the functions of the leading organ of the town Party organisation, takes on for a time, till a proper Provincial Committee is built, the rights and duties of the Provincial Committee and develops its work in the administrative limits of the province, beginning with the chief industrial centres.

(27) The regular Provincial Conference is called by the Provincial Party Committee if possible once in six months. Extraordinary Conferences are called at the decision of the Provincial Committee or on the decision of one-third of the total number of members of the Provincial organisation, providing consent of Central Committee is given.

Quotas of representation and the manner of election to the Provincial Conference are fixed every time by the Provincial Committee.

The Provincial Party Conference discusses and confirms the report of the work of the Provincial Committee, and elects the Provincial Committee of six members and two candidates, and delegates to the All-Indian Communist Party Congress.

(28) The Provincial Committee appoints a secretary and an assistant. The secretary of the Provincial Committee carries on current work, directs the apparatus of the Provincial Committee, directs the proper distribution of Party workers and ensures the fulfilment of the decisions of the Provincial Party Conference, the Provincial Committee, and the directives of the Central Committee of the Party. The secretaries of each Provincial Committee are confirmed by the Central Committee of the Party. The Provincial Committee gives regular reports on its work to the C. C. on the date and in forms as established by the Central Committee.

(29) In order better to carry out the tasks which face the Provincial Committee, and to ensure the proper leadership of the work of the local Party organisations, the members of the Provincial Party Committee are attached to definite districts of the province and divide among themselves the functions of the Provincial Committee, such as :—

- (a) Editor of the provincial organ (confirmed by the C. C. of the Party).
- (b) The manager of the provincial technical apparatus and the organiser of the distribution of literature.
- (c) Treasurer.
- (d) Head of the work of the fractions in mass organisations.
- (e) Head of the special apparatus.
- (f) Head of the Party educational department.

NOTE.—According to the concrete conditions of the work, the Provincial Committee may combine several of these functions in one comrade, form new functions, etc., or appoint comrades outside of the committee members to carry such work as technical apparatus, subordinating him directly to the secretary.

(30) The Provincial Committee leads all the work of the provincial organisation in the intervals between Provincial Conferences, represents the provincial organisation of the Party in relations with other organisations and institutions, organises various

provincial Party institutions and guides their activity, appoints the editors of the provincial newspapers, confirms the secretaries and editors of district organs, distributes the forces and funds of the provincial organisation, and has charge of the provincial treasury.

(31) With the aim of strengthening the proper leadership of the local organisations and ensuring a more thorough check-up on the fulfilment of decisions, the Provincial Committee has the right to send representatives and instructors to the localities.

(V) The Town and Local Organisations.

(32) In the town and village talukas (for several village communities), town (or local) organisations are formed, with the confirmation of the Provincial Committees. The highest organ of the town (or local) Party organisation is the town (or local) Conference. The town (or local) Party Conference is called by the town (or local) Party Committee, if possible every six months. Extraordinary Conferences are called on the decision of the town (or local) committee, or at the demand of one-third of the total number of members in the town (or local) organisation.

The town (or local) Conference discusses and confirms the report of the town (or local) committee, elects the town (or local) committee of five members and two candidates, and delegates to the Provincial Party Conference.

(33) The town (or local) committee, elects a secretary (to be confirmed by the Provincial Committee), organises and confirms cells and fractions in mass organisations, organises the collection of membership dues, organises various Party institution and commissions within the limits of the town (locality) and guides their activity, appoints the editor of the town (locality) Party organ (to be confirmed by the Provincial Committee), guides the work of the cells and fractions in the lower ranks of the mass organisations, distributes the forces and funds of the Party within the limits of the town (locality), and has charge of the town (or local) funds.

(34) In order better to carry out the tasks which face the town (or local) committee, the members of the town (or local) committee are attached to definite cells and fractions in mass organisations as representatives or instructors of the committee, and also distribute among themselves the chief functions of the apparatus of the town (or local) committees, such as :—

- (a) The editor of the town (or local) organ.
- (b) The leader of the town (or local) technical apparatus and the distribution of literature.
- (c) The treasurer.
- (d) The head of the work of the fractions in mass organisations.
- (e) The head of the special work.

NOTE.—According to the concrete conditions of the work, the town (or local) committee may combine several of these functions in one person, form new functions, etc. The special work has to be entirely separated from the general Party work.

- (f) The town (or local) committee will give regular reports on its work to the Provincial Committee on the dates and in the forms which are fixed every time by the Provincial Committee.

(VI) The Section Committees in the Big Cities.

(35) In the big towns, with the permission of the C. C., section organisations are formed under the control of the town committee, and work under its direction. The section organisations of big towns will work according to the rules for town organisations.

(VII) Cells.

(36) The basis of the Party is the factory cell. These cells are formed in factories, mills, big farms, units, institutions, etc., if there are not less than three Party members. Besides the factory cells in the mills, chawl and street cells are organised from among the Party members who cannot be in factory cells—like small handicraftsmen and traders, housewives, etc. In the village, village cells are organised. Special cells act on the basis of special instructions of the Central Committee. The cells are confirmed by the local or town committees.

NOTE.—Each group of class-conscious workers, poor peasants, and other toilers can on their own initiative organise a Party cell and begin Communist work among the masses. Such Party cells which are organised on the initiative of non-Party class-conscious workers can be accepted into the Party by the town or local Party committee according to the statutes after a careful personal investigation of the membership both in respect to political views and in respect to honesty and loyalty to the cause of the revolution.

(37) In big factories, in order to adapt to conditions of underground existence, separate department cells are organised and, through cell organisers, form a joint unit.

(38) The cell links up the workers, peasants, and others with the leading organs of the Party. Its tasks are :—

- (1) Agitation and organisational work among the masses for the Party slogans and decisions.
- (2) The attraction of sympathisers and new members and their political education.
- (3) The publication of a factory paper.
- (4) Assistance to the town (or local) committee in its everyday organisational and agitational work.

- (5) Active participation as a Party unit in the economic and political life of their factory and city and also of the whole country, active participation in the discussion and solution and carrying out of all general Party questions.

(39) In order to carry on the current work, the cell elects a secretary, who is confirmed by the town (or local) committee. The members of the cell distribute among themselves various duties in the factory: (1) collection of membership dues; (2) publication and distribution of the factory Party paper; (3) leadership of the fractions of the factory mass organisations (trade union, sport, cultural, educational, etc.); (4) active work among the toiling masses and recruiting new members; (5) actively carry out the decisions of the cell and higher Party organisations.

(VIII) Fractions in Mass Organisations.

(40) At all Congresses, meetings, and in the elected organs of the mass organisations outside the Party—trade unions, factory committees, peasant organisations, co-operative societies, sport clubs, youth organisations, etc.—where there are not less than three Party members, Party fractions are organised which must function in an organised way, strengthen Party discipline, work to increase the influence of the Party, carry Party policy among non-Party masses. For current work, the fraction elects a secretary.

(41) The fraction is completely controlled by the corresponding Party committee (C. C., provincial committees, town or local committees or nucleus), and on all questions must strictly and without vacillation carry out the decisions of the Party organisations which lead them.

The fractions of the higher bodies of mass organisations, by agreement with the corresponding Party committee, may send directives to the fractions of the lower bodies of the same mass organisations, and the latter must carry them out without fail as directives from a higher Party organ.

(IX) Inner-Party Democracy and Party Discipline.

(42) The free and business-like discussion of Party policy in the various organisations or in the Party as a whole is the indefeasible right of every member of the Party, arising from inner-Party democracy. Only on the basis of inner-Party democracy can Bolshevik self-criticism be developed and Party discipline strengthened, as the latter should be conscious and not mechanical. But a discussion on questions of Party policy must be developed in such a way that it should not lead to Party organisations or Party workers being exposed to the police terror or to attempts on the part of an insignificant minority to force their views on the vast majority of the Party members and to attempts to form fractional groups which will break the unity of

the Party, which will lead to splitting the working class. Therefore, a wide inner-Party discussion can be recognised as necessary, only if :—

- (a) This necessity is recognised by at least several big provincial organisations.
- (b) If inside the C. C. there is not a sufficiently firm majority on the chief questions of Party policy.
- (c) If, despite the existence of a firm majority in the C. C. for a certain point of view, the C. C. nevertheless considers it necessary to verify the correctness of its policy by discussion in the Party.

Only if these conditions are carried out and secrecy is ensured, can the Party be guaranteed against the misuse of inner-Party democracy by anti-Party elements. Only on these conditions can we reckon on inner-Party democracy being useful for the cause and not being utilised to damage the Party and the working class. Discussion must take place under the strong leadership of the C. C., and in the localities under the leadership of the provincial town (or local) committees.

(43) The preservation of the unity of the Party, a merciless struggle against the slightest attempts at fractional struggle and splits, the strictest Party discipline, are the first duties of all members of the Party and all Party organisations. In order to bring about the strictest discipline inside the Party and secure the greatest unity while removing all factions, the C. C. has the right to apply all Party penalties to the point of expulsion from the Party in cases of violations of discipline or the existence of factions.

(44) The decisions of the leading Party organs must be carried out exactly and rapidly. Failure to carry out the decisions of higher organisations and other actions which are recognised as crimes against the Party will be dealt with as follows : For a local organisation : censure and a general registration (disbanding the organisation) ; for individual Party members : various forms of censure (public rebuke, reprimand, etc.), public censure, temporary removal from responsible work, expulsion from the Party.

All Party organisations from the cell upwards have the right to inflict Party penalties. In order to carry on a preliminary investigation of the activity of Party members, Party committees may set up individual cases, if it be necessary, temporary investigation committees, whose conclusions later must be confirmed by the Party committee.

(X) The Financial Resources of the Party.

(45) The financial resources of the Party and its organisations are comprised of membership dues, income from Party undertakings, and other incomes.

(46) The monthly membership dues for Party members are as follows : . . . ; unemployed members of the Party are exempt from the payment of membership dues.

(47) On entering the Party an entrance fee of . . . must be paid.

(48) The C. C. decides what proportion of the membership dues will remain at the disposal of the cell, and how much will be put at the disposal of the town (or local) committee, provincial committee, and the C. C.

APPENDIX IV.

(Referred to on pages 165, 222 and 225.)

RESOLUTION ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC CHANGES PASSED BY THE KARACHI CONGRESS, 1931.

This Congress is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what "Swaraj", as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress, therefore, declares that any constitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide, or enable the Swaraj Government to provide, for the following :

1. Fundamental rights of the people, including :

- (a) freedom of association and combination ;
- (b) freedom of speech and of the press ;
- (c) freedom of conscience and the free professions and practice of religion, subject to public order and morality ;
- (d) protection of the culture, language, and scripts of the minorities ;
- (e) equal rights and obligations of all citizens, without any bar on account of sex ;
- (f) no disability to attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste or creed or sex in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling ;
- (g) equal rights to all citizens in regard to public roads, wells, schools and other places of public resort ;
- (h) right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf ;
- (i) no person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law.

2. Religious neutrality on the part of the State.

3. Adult suffrage.

4. Free primary education.

5. A living wage for industrial workers, limited hours of labour, healthy conditions of work, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment.

6. Labour to be freed from serfdom or conditions bordering on serfdom.

7. Protection of women workers, and specially adequate provisions for leave during maternity period.

8. Prohibition against employment of children of school going age in factories.

9. Right of labour to form unions to protect their interests with suitable machinery for settlement of disputes by arbitration.

10. Substantial reduction in agricultural rent or revenue paid by the peasantry, and in case of uneconomic holdings exemption from rent for such period as may be necessary, relief being given to small zamindars wherever necessary by reason of such reduction.

11. Imposition of a progressive income-tax on agricultural incomes fixed above a fixed minimum.

12. A graduated inheritance tax.

13. Military expenditure to be reduced by at least one-half of the present scale.

14. Expenditure and salaries in civil departments to be largely reduced. No servant of the state, other than specially employed experts and the like, to be paid above a certain fixed figure which should not ordinarily exceed Rs 500 per month.

15. Protection of indigenous cloth by exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country.

16. Total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

17. No duty on salt manufactured in India.

18. Control over exchange and currency policy so as to help Indian industries and bring relief to the masses.

19. Control by the state of key industries and ownership of mineral resource.

20. Control of usury—direct or indirect.

It shall be open to the A. I. C. C. to revise, amend or add to the foregoing so far as such revision, amendment or addition is not inconsistent with the policy and principles thereof.

APPENDIX V.

(Referred to on page 225.)

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

Certified by Waman Rao Kulkarni, Secretary of the Independence of India League, Bombay, as having been drafted by M. N. Roy.

This Congress declares that ;

The goal of the Indian National Congress is to secure the freedom of the Indian people from foreign domination. Self-government within the British Empire—even full Dominion Status—will not liberate the bulk of the Indian people from the burden of the colonial exploitation. A Dominion constitution will confer some political rights upon a small upper section of the Indian people. It will make them economic concessions not by foregoing an iota of imperialist booty, but at the expense of the Indian masses.

2. The first condition for complete national independence is the transfer of all power to the people. But political power is never transferred by the ruler to the ruled voluntarily or automatically. Therefore, the task of the National Congress is to mobilize and organize the people for the capture of political power.

3. The Delhi agreement commits the Congress to the principle of self-government within the British Empire. Negotiation with Imperialism on the basis of that agreement will lead, at the very best, to Dominion Status. Participation in any such negotiation means renunciation of the right of the determination of the Indian people. For, any constitution so framed could become law only on the sanction of the British Parliament. On the other hand, it is an illusion to believe that any constitution liberating the Indian people from imperialist domination will ever be sanctioned by the British Parliament. So, self-government attained through negotiation with the foreign rulers will always be a sham, as far as the masses of the people are concerned. This being the case, the Delhi agreement is incompatible with the struggle for the realization of the national freedom. The Congress therefore repudiates it and declares the firm determination to assert in practice the right of the Indian people to self-determination.

4. The constitution of the Free Indian State can be promulgated only by a democratic sovereign body elected for the purpose by those sections of the Indian people whose interests are entirely irreconcilable with imperialism even in a veiled form as it would be under Dominion Status. The struggle for the assertion of the right of self-determination, therefore, should begin with the agitation for

the election of a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, and culminate in the rise of the organ of democratic power.

5. While initiating the struggle for the capture of power, the Congress takes note of the relation of forces in the struggle. A section of the Indian people never stood for national independence. Lately, they have definitely allied themselves with imperialism as against the struggle of the majority of the Indian people for national freedom. They condemned the independence resolution of the Congress no less vehemently than did the imperialists. They went to the Round Table Conference defying the decision of the Congress. In the struggle for freedom the oppressed and exploited masses, constituting over ninety per cent. of the population, come up against the united front of the foreign imperialism and the Indian upper classes (princes, landlords and capitalists). The decisions of the Round Table Conference are meant to cement this counter revolutionary united front.

6. In view of this relation of forces the Congress declares the following as the fundamental principles of the organic law of the free Indian State :—

- (a) Transfer of all power to the oppressed and exploited masses ;
- (b) Abolition of the Native State, and parasitic landlords ;
- (c) Freedom of the peasantry from all exploitation and expropriation so that the greater part of their surplus production remains in their possession ;
- (d) Nationalization of land, public utilities, mineral resources and banks ;
- (e) Unconditional repudiation of debts contracted by the irresponsible Government ;
- (f) An irreducible standard of living for the workers through the introduction of minimum wage, limited hours of labour, healthy conditions of work, insurance against unemployment sickness, old age, etc. ;
- (g) Control of the economic life of the country by the workers and peasants to guarantee that the fruits of national freedom will not be usurped by the fortunate few.

7. Learning from the experience of other countries, the Congress rejects formal parliamentary democracy which does not confer any real power on the masses ; further, in view of the fact that a section of the Indian people has definitely allied itself with imperialism against the popular striving for freedom, the Constituent Assembly shall necessarily be elected only by those who require freedom from imperialist domination as the first condition for progress and prosperity. They constitute more than ninety per cent. of the population.

8. In order to avoid the discredited path of Parliamentary democracy, the Constituent Assembly will be elected not by individual voters, but by local committees of deputies from the organization of the various oppressed and exploited classes, namely workers, peasants, artisans, small traders, employees, poor intellectuals, soldiers, and policemen. Thus elected, the Constituent Assembly will remain in close contact with the organised masses, being the organ through which these will exercise political power effectively.

9. The immediate task is to organize the various oppressed and exploited classes in the course of an unrelenting struggle with partial demands such as (a) higher wages, (b) eight-hour day, (c) better conditions of labour, (d) unemployment, sickness, old age and maternity insurance at the cost of the employers, (e) reduction of inland rent or tax by 25 per cent, (f) annulment of the indebtedness of the poor peasants, artisans and workers, (g) complete exemption of rent and taxes for peasants living upon "uneconomic holdings"; (h) control of usury interest not to exceed six per cent. per annum, (i) rent of dwelling quarters in towns not to be more than ten per cent. of the wage or salary of the occupant, (j) abolition of all indirect taxes, (k) free primary education, (l) freedom of press, speech and association.

10. The next stage will be to set up local committees to co-ordinate the struggle of the various classes in the common struggle for the capture of political power. Finally, the local committees shall elect the organ of democratic sovereignty to assume supreme power and promulgate the constitution of the free Indian State on the basis of the principles formulated above.

APPENDIX VI.

(Referred to on page 225.)

ALL-INDIA CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY.

PROGRAMME.

Objective :

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the State.
3. Socialisation of key and principal industries (*e.g.*, Steel, Cotton, Jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantations, Mines), Banks, Insurance and Public Utilities with a view to the progressive socialisation of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.
4. State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. Organisation of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialised sector of economic life.
6. Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters without compensation.
7. Re-distribution of land to peasants.
8. Encouragement and promotion of co-operative and collective farming by the State.
9. Liquidation of debts owing by peasants and workers.
10. Recognition of the right to work or maintenance by the State.
11. "To every one according to his needs and from every one according to his capacity" to be the basis ultimately of distribution and production of economic goods.
12. Adult franchise on a functional basis.
13. No support to, or discrimination between, religions by the State and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
14. No discrimination between the sexes by the State.
15. Repudiation of the so-called Public Debt of India.

Plan of Action :

1. Work within the Indian National Congress with a view to secure its acceptance of the objects and programme of the Party.

2. Organisation of peasant and labour unions, and entry into such unions where they exist, for the purpose of developing and participating in the day to day economic and political struggles of peasants and workers and intensifying the class struggle of the masses and of creating a powerful mass movement for the achievement of Independence and Socialism.

3. Organisation of, and participation in Youth leagues, Women's organisations, Volunteer organisations, etc., etc., for the purpose of getting their support to the programme of the Party.

4. Active opposition to all imperialist wars and the utilisation of such and other crises for the intensification of the national struggle.

5. Refusal to enter at any stage into negotiations on the constitutional issue with the British Government.

6. Convening after the capture of power of a Constituent Assembly elected by local committees of deputies of workers, peasants and other exploited classes for the purpose of formulating a Constitution for the Indian State.

IMMEDIATE DEMANDS.

Political :

1. Freedom of speech and of the Press.
2. Freedom of association and combination.
3. Repeal of all anti-national and anti-labour laws.
4. Re-instatement of all farmers and tenants deprived of their lands owing to their participation in the movement for National Independence.
5. Release of all political prisoners detained without trial and withdrawal of all orders of externment, internment or restraint on political grounds.
6. Free and compulsory primary education and the liquidation of adult illiteracy.
7. Drastic reduction, by at least 50 per cent., of the military expenditure of the Government of India.
8. Regulation and control of religious endowments.

Economic :

9. Municipalisation of Public Utilities.
10. Control of usury, direct and indirect.
11. Liquidation of debts owed by workers and peasants.
12. A steeply graduated tax on all incomes, including incomes from agriculture, above a fixed minimum.
13. Graduated death duties.

Concerning Labour :

14. Freedom of labour from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.
15. The right to form unions, to strike and to picket.
16. Compulsory recognition of unions by employers.
17. A living wage, a 40-hour week and healthy quarters and conditions of work.
18. Insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident, old-age, etc.
19. One month's leave every year with full pay to all workers and two months' leave with full pay to women workers during maternity.
20. Prohibition against employment of children of school-going age in factories, and women and of children under sixteen underground.
21. Equal wages for equal work.
22. Weekly payment of wages whenever demanded.

Agrarian :

23. Elimination of landlordism in zamindari and talukdari areas without compensation.
 24. Encouragement of co-operative farming.
 25. Liquidation of arrears of rent.
 26. Complete exemption from rents and taxes of all peasants with uneconomic holdings.
 27. Reduction of rent and land revenue by at least 50 per cent.
 28. Abolition and penalisation of all feudal and semi-feudal levies on the peasantry.
 29. Penalisation of illegal exactions and forced labour.
 30. Freedom from attachment in execution of rent or money decrees of homestead, agricultural resources and that portion of a peasant's holding which is just sufficient to maintain an average peasant family.
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APPENDIX VII.

(Referred to on page 297.)

EXTRACT FROM *THE GAZETTE OF INDIA*, No. 37,
DATED SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1932.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT (CENTRAL REVENUES).

NOTIFICATIONS.

CUSTOMS.

Sinla, the 10th September 1932.

No. 61.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878 (VIII of 1878), and in supersession of the Notification of the Government of India in the Finance Department (Central Revenues), No. 28, dated the 28th May 1927, the Governor General in Council is pleased to prohibit the bringing into British India of—

- (1) any document issued by or emanating from—
 - (a) the Communist International, or
 - (b) any organisation affiliated to or controlled by or connected with the Communist International, or
 - (c) any person holding office in any such organisation, or
- (2) any document containing substantial reproductions of the matter contained in any such document.

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